







THE LIFE AND TIMES
OF
GEORGE VILLIERS
DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM.

FROM ORIGINAL AND AUTHENTIC SOURCES.

BY MRS. THOMSON,

AUTHOR OF

"MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF HENRY THE EIGHTH,"

"LIFE OF SIR WALTER RALEGH,"

"MEMOIRS OF SARAH, DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH,"

&c., &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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P R E F A C E.

No complete life of this favourite of James I. and Charles I. has hitherto appeared, except the biographical sketch by Sir Henry Wotton.

That interesting account deserves all credit, from the character of its author; yet coming from one who owed Buckingham great obligations, it is more of a eulogy than a memoir; and is evidently written with a view to silence those slanderous attacks which not only pursued the Duke during his life, but continued after his death.

The "Disparity between the Earl of Essex and the Duke of Buckingham," by Clarendon, printed, as well as Sir Henry Wotton's Memoir in the "*Reliquiæ Wottonianæ*," bears, likewise, the impress of enthusiastic admiration. It is the tribute of a partisan rather than the memorial of an historian.

The opinions expressed, nevertheless, in both these works, have been confirmed, in many points, by the letters in the State Paper Office, to which historical writers have not only now free access, but which have lately been arranged, whilst valuable Calendars have been published, so as to facilitate investigations which were formerly most laborious. In all that relates personally to George Villiers, the State Papers are especially important.

The great Rebellion, amongst mightier devastations, swept away most of that domestic correspondence which might otherwise have been found in the three noble families who are collaterally descended from Buckingham; those of the Earls of Jersey and Clarendon, and of his Grace the Duke of Rutland, none of whom possess any letters of their unfortunate ancestor. Nor is this fact to be wondered at, when we consider not only the stormy period that succeeded Buckingham's death, but the extreme youth of his children at the time of his assassination, the second marriage of his widow, and the long years of exile which his heir, George, the second Duke of Buckingham of the house of Villiers, passed in wandering and indigence.

The documents in the State Paper Office become, therefore, doubly valuable, and every possible advantage has been taken of a mine so

rich in the present Memoir. It was, indeed, in 1849, some time before the Calendars by Mrs. Everett Green, and Mr. Bruce, were published, that this work was begun. The letters in the State Paper Office were then merely arranged in chronological order, and divided into foreign and domestic. But the valuable advice, the very great courtesy, and kind assistance of Mr. Lechmere and Mr. Lemon, enabled the authoress still to derive great benefit from her researches even at that time. Her work having been laid aside, though nearly completed, during a residence of several years on the Continent, the publication of the Calendars of State Papers had, meantime, taken place, and they enabled her, in resuming her task, to revise such parts of the memoir as had been written, and to finish the whole with greater accuracy and fulness of information than could otherwise have been done, and although the revision has caused considerable delay and labour, it has been of incalculable advantage to the work.

Of the Calendar for 1628-1629, which recently appeared, edited by Mr. Bruce, the authoress has not been able to avail herself to the same extent as of the four former volumes, since her work was nearly printed before it was published. She has, therefore, been obliged to

insert in her Appendix the examination of Ben Jonson, and one or two other papers which could not be interwoven with the narrative, although of great interest. It is satisfactory to her to find that the contents of this, the latest volume of the State Paper Calendars, confirm, in some important points, the views which she has taken of Buckingham's motives and intentions. They also exhibit distinctly the great difficulties of his course; and more especially in regard to the fatal expedition to La Rochelle.

The authoress believes that she has discharged her task as a biographer with impartiality: she confesses, nevertheless, to a strong interest in the faulty but attractive character which she has attempted to delineate. When stating, in her summary of the Duke's qualities, that time and trouble were rendering him a wiser and a better man, she was ignorant of the following tribute to Buckingham, written, when all patronage was closed by his death, by Dudley, Viscount Dorchester, to the Queen of Bohemia, and printed in the last volume of the Calendar.

“The Duke declared a purpose to Dorchester
“on his (the Viscount's) last return from the
“Queen of Bohemia, which he has since often re-
“iterated, of making him, by his favour with the
“King his master, an instrument of better days

“than they have seen of late, he having a firm
“resolution (which he manifested to some other
“persons) to walk new ways, but upon old
“grounds and maxims, both of religion and policy,
“finding his own judgment to have been misled
“by errors of truth and persuasions of persons
“he began better to know; so as knowing
“otherwise the nobleness of his nature, and
“great parts and vigour, Dorchester had full
“satisfaction in him himself, and made no doubt
“but the world would have, notwithstanding the
“public hatred to which he was exposed. This
“testimony Dorchester owes him after his death.”¹

Of the restoration of the Navy by the strenuous efforts of the Duke the State Papers present almost a chronicle. The authoress regrets that she is not competent to do the subject justice; and hopes that some abler hand may employ with more effect the copious materials which will be found in those documents, of which she has touched merely on the leading points. Her aim has been chiefly to shew the energy, the sometime lofty purposes, of one who has been portrayed as a merely rapacious, vain, remorseless oppressor.

The state of the times, the Impeachment, the

¹ Calendar, edited by Mr. Bruce, for 1628, 1629, p. 270.

Remonstrance, the Petition of Right, all bear so strongly on the circumstances of the Duke's life, that it would be impossible, in a Memoir of him, to escape the difficult office of explaining to some extent the intricate politics of the day. In this attempt she also has derived her chief materials from the State Papers. Personal incidents, trusts, manners, character, literature, the arts, are subjects in regard to which the annals of this period are calculated to afford a great amount of instruction and interest.

The authoress has already expressed her obligations to Mr. Lechmere and Mr. Lemon ; to Mr. Bruce she also begs to offer her thanks for a suggestion by which she is enabled to insert an interesting account of the murder of Buckingham, in a letter from Lord Dorchester. (See page 112, vol. iii.)

She begs also to express her sense of the valuable aid afforded her by her friend, Mr. Amos, Professor of Law, Downing College, Cambridge, to whose kindness and great historical knowledge she is indebted for much that has facilitated her efforts.

March 1, 1860.

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LIFE AND TIMES OF

GEORGE VILLIERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE historians who attribute the calamities of the Great Rebellion to the misrule of James the First, under the pernicious influence of his favourites, draw a lively parallel between the condition of England at the accession of that monarch and the state of peril and embarrassment with which his great predecessor had to contend. Elizabeth, whose inauguration, long celebrated, after her death, as a day of jubilee, was regarded as the commencement of national prosperity, came to the throne under very adverse circumstances. The functions of Government were clogged with debt. The miserable state of the navy required

a constant vigilance to repel the chance of invasion, and to drive away pirates by whom the narrow seas were infested. The revenues of the Crown were insufficient to maintain its power and dignity; the country, moreover, was embroiled in religious dissensions; whilst the authority of the Queen was lessened by a disputed succession, and her mind harassed and embittered by the pretensions of the Dauphin of France to the Crown of England, in right of his wife, Mary Stuart.

James, on the contrary, began his reign with every exterior advantage. His claim to the sovereignty was undoubted; and various causes had concurred to give great influence to the Crown. The subservient tributes of respect paid to its dignity were such as even to astonish the envoys of despotic France. Elizabeth had been served and addressed by her subjects on the knee; James, at all events for a time, continued that abject custom, which was a type of the prevailing national sentiment towards royalty. Commerce, in spite of monopolies, and of the injudicious interference of the Legislature with wages, was advancing; leases granted of large tracts of land had increased the opulence of the country; the improved prospects of the landholders acted on the prosperity of the manufacturing classes; whilst the general welfare was increased by

emigration; the religious persecutions on the Continent, driving from foreign towns ingenious workmen, sent them into England, where they introduced arts hitherto unknown in this country. The Constitution, too, had been maintained; and, with the exception of the court of the Star Chamber, over which James presided in person, the principles of liberty had not been materially invaded. There was no standing army; the tenets of Protestantism were established; and the Presbyterian education of the King afforded a hope that certain traces of the faith which had been renounced would die away, and that ceremonials which were objectionable to many would be speedily discontinued. Thus, the first of the Stuart Kings enjoyed blessings not possessed by any of his predecessors; and, ascending the throne, opened a new era in the history of the country.¹

James, nevertheless, was not long in showing how fallacious were all expectations founded on his good sense, and on the supposed liberal views which a people, now intelligent and prosperous, fondly anticipated in their ruler. Educated by Buchanan as if he had been destined for the Tutor of a College rather than for a King; his memory crammed; his capacity clogged with ill-digested learning; prejudiced as a Scotchman, yet

¹ Brodie's Constitutional History, vol. i., p. 337.

prejudiced against the established church of his native country, James well merited the sneering appellation of Henry IV. of France, who called him "Captain of Wits and Clerk of Arms,"² and proved, too lamentably, how easy it is by wrong-headedness to embroil and debase a country.

The blunders which James committed in his civil government began before the subject of this memoir was introduced to royal notice; yet, since George Villiers, first Duke of Buckingham, figured prominently in that period which is supposed to have been the commencement of decay, the origin of the Great Rebellion has been attributed to his maladministration, nor has the grave responsibility been absolutely disavowed, even by Lord Clarendon, the apologist and admirer of the Duke of Buckingham.

"I am not," writes Lord Clarendon, "so sharp-sighted as those who have discerned the Rebellion contriving from (if not before) the death of Queen Elizabeth, and fomented by several Princes and great Ministers of State in Christendom to the time it broke out; neither do I look back so far, because I believe the design to have been so long since formed, but that, by viewing the tempers, dispositions, and habits at that time of the

² Sully's Memoirs, vol. i., p. 309.

Court and country, we may discern the minds of men prepared, of some to act, and of others to suffer all that has since happened.”³

Whatsoever may have been the faults of James the First, it is probable that they would not essentially have affected the well-being of his son, had not the system of favouritism, which was one of James's greatest weaknesses, acted upon the character of the young Prince, whose earliest associations were stamped with devotion to Buckingham. At once minister, minion, and master, the power behind the throne, to whose dictation, during the years of his brief and bright career, even the High Court of Parliament submitted—the distinction of being the last royal favourite in England is due to this ill-fated man. By him the “sluice of honour,” as an old writer expresses it, “was opened and closed at pleasure.” He was to King James a sort of “Parhelion,”⁴ at whose course foreign Courts wondered, whilst the sagacious and prophetic at home trembled as they beheld at once its eccentricity and its splendour. At his death the experiment, which had been tried once too often, was abandoned, never to be renewed; and no acknowledged successor in the meteoric career of Buckingham ever

³ History of the Rebellion.

⁴ Bishop Hacket's Life of the Lord Keeper Williams, p. 39.

appeared before the dazzled gaze of our countrymen. The minutest circumstances relative to his origin are interesting, not only as they concern one whose noble bearing and powers of fascination almost effaced, during his life, the remembrance of his errors, but as they unfold the foundation of a great family which still influences our national councils.

Until the elevation of George Villiers from low estate to an unparalleled career of success, the race from which he sprang, though ancient and honourable, was but partially known to fame, and his ancestors, how valiant and loyal soever they had proved, had held the tenor of their way with little variation, and with only an occasional gleam of celebrity on one or other of its lineage; a course of moderate prosperity maintaining, without altering, its condition—rather, as Sir Henry Wotton has well expressed it, “without obscurity than with any great lustre.”⁵ “I will, however,” adds the same quaint writer, after referring to the difficulty of making a proper estimate of all public characters, “show, therefore, as evenly as I can, and deduce him from his cradle through the deep and lubrick waves of State and Court till he be swallowed in the Gulf of Fatality.”⁶

⁵ Reliquiæ Wottonianæ. Life of Geo. Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, p. 208.

⁶ Reliquiæ Wottonianæ.

It was the fashion of those who were opposed to the Duke of Buckingham in his political career to speak with contempt of his origin, and thus attack one who was endowed with every possible advantage of natural gifts—and upon whom honours were lavished—on what was erroneously supposed to be his vulnerable point. Sir Symonds D'Ewes, as might be expected, was not backward in his strictures against a courtier so favoured and envied. He compares Villiers, indeed, to a man of the highest rank, but draws the parallel in these offensive terms:—"He was likest to Henry Loraine, Duke of Guise, in the most of the later passages of his life and death, that possible could be, onelie in this they differed, that Guise was a prince born, but Buckingham was but a younger son of an ordinarie familie of gentrie, of which the coat armoure was so meane as either in this age or of late years, without any ground, right, or authoritie, that I could see, they deferred their owne coate armoure, and bare the arms of Weyland, a Suffolke family, being argent on a cross gules, five escalops, &c."⁷ And again, when speaking of Felton, the assassin of the Duke, Sir Simond cannot forbear remarking:—"His familie was, doubtless, more noble and ancient than the

⁷ Quoted in Nichols's *History of Leicestershire*, vol. iii., p. 189.

Duke of Buckingham's, and his ende much blessedder." ⁸ To similar strictures does Wotton probably refer, when he remarks that, in "a wilde pamphlet" published about the Duke of Buckingham, the writers, "beside other pityfule malignities, would scant allow him to be a gentleman."

It is far easier to make a charge of this nature than to maintain it, for the family of Villiers had long been known in the County of Leicester, where it removed from Kinalton, in Nottinghamshire, the first place of migration from Normandy; where, writes Sir Henry Wotton, "it had been long seated." It does not appear that Leicestershire was the only place of residence which the ancestors of George Villiers possessed; as the same authority expresses it, they "*chiefly* continued" in that county for the space of four hundred years before the birth of the first Duke of Buckingham; ⁹ a time long enough, one might suppose, to satisfy a reasonable genealogist.

The name of Villiers, conformably to the arbitrary spelling of ancient times, was written differently, sometimes Villiers, at others Villers, Villeres, and Vyleres; nor did those who bore this famous surname finally adopt the spelling "Villiers" until the reign of James I.

⁸ Nichol's History of Leicestershire.

⁹ Reliquiæ Wottonianæ, p. 208.

The founder of the family, Philip de Villers, of Lisle Adam, was a Norman Seigneur; he was also Grand Master of the Island of Rhodes, and signalized himself in the defence of that island against the Turks. After the conquest, certain lands in Leicestershire were granted by William the Conqueror to a Norman Knight bearing the appellation De Villers; but another branch of the same race remained in France, and its various members have been distinguished in courts, in arms, and as legislators. Argiver de Villers was sewer¹⁰ to Philip the First; Pierre de Villers held the office of Grand Master in his native country, under Charles the Sixth.¹¹

Invention was therefore not requisite to dignify the long unbroken line of respectable progenitors to whom George Villiers owed his origin. "Heraldry," remarks a certain writer, when referring to this celebrated man, "might blazon as large fields of his pedigree as might concern any subject to prove."¹² Without bringing that assertion to the test, it is sufficient to add that successive generations flourished and passed away, sometimes emerging from their seclusion to follow

¹⁰ Fuller's Worthies of Leicestershire.

¹¹ Sanderson's Lives of Mary, Queen of Scots, and her Son, p. 467.

¹² An officer appointed to serve up a feast.

the reigning monarch to the wars, as in the instances of Sir Alexander de Villers, and Sir Nicholas his son, the former assisting Edward the First in the Crusades, and adding to his name the designation of "Brokesby;" and the latter, after sundry exploits in the Holy Land, augmenting his armorial bearings by the Cross of St. George and five escalop shells, ancient badges of the Crusaders; so that the "coat armour," esteemed so mean by Sir Symonds D'Ewes, and said to have been borrowed, was not without its distinctions, even at an early period.

But it is singular that from a personage of lowly fortunes, if not of humble family, sprang the generation which was so noted in its time.

At Brokesby, the manorial residence of the race, there had dwelt, for several centuries, successive proprietors, little remarkable, since the time of the valiant Crusaders, either for their career in arms, or for their ambition to rise in the State. A stream, dignified by the name of the River Wreke, flows near the house, which is said to have been the residence of the Villiers family; a gentleman's seat, a plain and somewhat insignificant building, having a central division, and two projecting wings, now owns the name of Brokesby.¹³

¹³ It is situated nine miles from Leicester, and six from Melton Mowbray.

The town of Brokesby has, of late years, been returned as a decayed town; but its church is worthy of note in a county which, as Fuller remarks, "affordeth no cathedrals, and as for the parish churches, they may take the eye, but not ravish the admiration of the beholder." This structure, dedicated to St. Michael, boasts a handsome tower, above which rises a small spire, well crocheted; the battlements of the tower are remarkably beautiful, being open worked, and embellished with a row of shields, of which the most conspicuous is that of George Villiers, first Duke of Buckingham, and of his Duchess, and on it there is an honorary augmentation, showing the descent which he claimed from the blood royal of Edward the Fourth.¹⁴ It seems as if, amid the decay which surrounds it, this church has remained as a witness of the former greatness of that now extinct branch of the Villiers family, whose glories emblazon its battlements and windows. The direct line of the favourite of James the First ceased in two generations after his proud and brief career.

From the retirement of Brokesby, one of its owners was summoned, during a royal progress, to the presence of Queen Elizabeth. This was Sir George Villiers, the father of the Duke of

¹⁴ Nichols's History of Leicestershire, vol. iii., p. 189.

Buckingham, who was consequently knighted, when High Sheriff for Leicestershire,¹⁵ by the Queen. Sir George married the daughter of William Sanders, of Harrington, in the County of Northampton, and had by that marriage two sons, William, who inherited Brokesby and became a baronet; and Edward, afterwards President of Munster, and the ancestor of the present Earl of Jersey.

Three daughters were also the issue of this marriage; Elizabeth, who married Lord Butler, of Bramfield; Anne, who married William Washington, of Pakington, County of Leicester; and Frances, unmarried.¹⁶ Their mother died, and Sir George, perhaps imprudently, for his estate was not considerable, formed a second union.

Some circumstances rendered this step, indeed, peculiarly indiscreet; and nothing could account for so rash an act in a man of grave years, but an infatuation produced by extraordinary personal gifts, and probably by some ability and management on the part of his second wife.

It is evident that the Knight had never contemplated the probability of such an event, for he settled the greater portion of his estates

¹⁵ In 1591. Nichols's History of Leicestershire.

¹⁶ Collins's Peerage. Edited by Sir Egerton Brydges. Art., Jersey.

upon his first wife and her children ; and a mere pittance remained for the issue of any second marriage. Yet, in spite of these considerations, Sir George Villiers was captivated by a handsome person, the attractions of which appear not to have been wholly lost upon him even during the lifetime of the first Lady Villiers.

It happened that among the inferior servants of his household, there lived a young woman, named Mary Beaumont, the indigent member of an ancient family,¹⁷ by some asserted to have been that of the Beaumonts of Cole-Orton, in Leicestershire, by others, to have been settled at Glenfield, in the same county.

The occupation of Mary Beaumont is stated to have been that of a "kitchen-maid" in the house of Sir George Villiers, but this assertion may possibly be traced to the desire of a certain class of writers to debase as much as possible the family of Villiers.

That she was, however, in a menial capacity of some kind, appears from common report to have been understood.¹⁸ "Her ragged habit," observes

¹⁷ Roger Coke's *Detection of the Court of James I.*, vol. i., p. 81. See, also, note in the *Secret History of the Court of King James I.*, vol. i., p. 444, edited by Sir Walter Scott.

¹⁸ Sir Anthony Weldon, speaking of the Duke of Bucking-

a contemporary historian, "could not shade the beautiful and excellent frame of her person, which Sir George, taking notice of, prevailed with his lady to remove her out of the kitchen into her chamber, which, with much importunity on Sir George's part, and unwillingness of my lady, at last was done."

After the death of his wife, the sentiments of the widower were expressed without reserve. He was observed "to look very sweet upon my lady's woman;" he was known to bestow upon her twenty pounds, to purchase as good a dress as that sum would procure; and when he saw her attired in a manner suitable to her age and loveliness, he was transported with admiration. The result may easily be conceived; the knight married the serving-maid, and as ambitious a spirit as ever stimulated the energies of woman thus received its first gratification. Endowed by nature with such profuse outward gifts, Mary Beaumont possessed, no less, the advantages of a shrewd sense; she was fond, as her subsequent career showed, of state and profusion; she became, from her influ-

ham, observes, that his "father was of an ancient family, his mother of a mean, and a waiting gentlewoman, with whom the old man (Sir George Villiers) fell in love." Secret History, vol. i., p. 442, edited by Sir Walter Scott.

ence and her attractions, the leader of the highest circles; whilst she retained over the mind of her son that sway which she deservedly acquired by her care of his infancy and childhood.

In after times, it is curious to find Mary Beaumont, then Lady Villiers Compton, inviting her country kindred to Court, and providing a place for them to learn to carry themselves in a "Court-like manner." It was the lowly serving-maid who first introduced what were called Country Dances instead of French dances, which her provincial relations could not learn soon enough for their deportment to assimilate with the costly garments with which their prodigal kinswoman supplied them, in order that they might do her credit in the gay spheres to which they were introduced.¹⁹

Three sons and a daughter were the offspring of this marriage; the eldest, John, afterwards created Baron Villiers, of Stoke, and Viscount Purbeck, was singularly infelicitous in his domestic life, but is said, by an historian adverse to the family, to have "exceeded them all in wit and honesty, and, by his influence, to have kept his brother George in some bounds of modesty, whilst he lived with him, by speaking plain English to him."²⁰

¹⁹ Secret History, vol. i., edited by Sir Walter Scott.

²⁰ Nichols's Progresses of James I., vol. iv., p. 688.

The next child of the second marriage was George Villiers, who was born at Brookesby, on the 20th of August in the year 1592.²¹ Another son, Christopher, became eventually Baron Daven-try, and Earl of Anglesea; a daughter, Mary, afterwards Countess of Denbigh, was also born, to encumber, as it seemed, the limited means with which the parents of this younger race were scarcely able to endow them.

On the fourth of January, 1505-6, Sir George Villiers died. His landed property consisted at that time of the Manors of Brookesby, Howby, Godby Marward, and the Grange of Goadby. These were all settled on the children of his first marriage. He was also lay impropriator of the tithes of herbage and hay, in the parishes of Cadewell and Wikeham, and these, he settled on the three sons of Mary Beaumont, John, George and Christopher;²² his daughter appears to have been left wholly portionless. When it is remembered that this family were all raised to rank and opulence, and that they were, in various instances, the sources from which the ancestry of several great houses is derived, the early privation and difficul-

²¹ Fuller styles him the second son of his mother, and the fourth of his father. — Fuller's *Worthies of Leicestershire*.

²² Nichols's *Hist. of Leicestershire*, p. 189.

ties of their career form a strong contrast to their subsequent elevation.

It was not alone poverty that seemed likely to keep the younger children of Sir George Villiers in obscurity; there were wanting in his father's heir those qualities which bring the humble forward, and enrich more than even prudence and frugality. Sir William, who now took possession of Brookesby, was contented with his country lot; and so much did he despise honours and titles, that when he was created a Baronet in 1619,²³ the dignity was almost forced upon him. "He was," says a contemporary author, "so careless of honour in courting that compliment, as that the King (James First) said, 'Sir William would scarce give him thanks for it, and doubted whether he would accept of it.'" Thus, little assistance in the career of life could be expected from one who would scarcely deem the prizes most sought for by men, worth the trouble of a little personal exertion.

Upon the death of her husband, Lady Villiers retired to Godby Marward, which was appropriated to her as a dower house. Her son,

²³ This title, the 109th baronetcy, ceased in 1711, when the elder branch of the Villiers family became extinct by the death of the third Baronet, Sir William, without issue.

George, was then ten years old ; the loss which he had sustained in the death of his father, great as it seemed, was fully compensated by the care of her whom Sir Henry Wotton entitles "his beautiful and provident mother." The promising boy had already received some education at Billesdon, in Leicestershire, where he was sent to school, and instructed in music and in some "slight literature;" but to no common hands would Lady Villiers, as the dawning personal charms of her son unfolded, entrust the culture of this, her favourite child ; she had him, henceforth, as his biographer expresses it, "in her especial care."²⁴ Possibly, in her widowed seclusion, when she looked upon the face which afterwards captivated all beholders, she anticipated the day when her son should appear at Court, and attract some marks of that royal favour which had been shewn to Leicester, to Raleigh, and to Essex for no better reason than that they were handsomer and more graceful than their compeers, and that their manly beauty was set off by the gallant bearing of well-trained "carpet knights." Queen Elizabeth had taught her subjects to value those attributes which had sunk so low in fashion and estimation in the troublous reign of Mary,

²⁴ *Reliquiæ Wottonianæ.*

or during the short and saintly career of Edward.

Lady Villiers had the discernment to perceive the deficiencies of her son's mind and character, and resolved to avail herself of those advantages with which he was endowed, without forcing his attention to pursuits that were ungenial to him. She soon discovered that he was neither inclined to reflection, nor disposed to study; nor did he ever alter in those respects, but continued, through life, illiterate, a defect which his readiness in some measure supplied, but which prevented his becoming a great statesman, in spite of the fairest opportunities that ever man enjoyed. In after life he learned, when at Court, "to sift and question well,"²⁵ and to supply his own shallow stock of information by "drawing or flowing unto him" the best sources of experience and knowledge in others. His manner, says Sir Henry Wotton, was so sweet and attractive, "in seeking what might be for the public or his own proper use, that if the Muses favoured him not, the Graces were his friends;" and Lord Clarendon remarks of Villiers, that "concerning the traits and endowments of his mind, if the consideration of learning extend itself not further than drudgery

²⁵ Reliquiæ Wottonianæ.

in books, the Duke's employment forbids us to suspect him of being any great scholar; but if a nimble and fluent expression and delivery of his mind (and his discourse was of all subjects) in a natural and proper dialect be considered, he was well lettered." ²⁶

Lady Villiers seems both to have foreseen all these defects, and to have prognosticated the atoning graces in her son. She acted as a needy and ambitious woman was likely to act. Instead of supplying the deficiencies of her son's character and intellect by a sound education, she directed his attention to dancing, fencing, and the other exercises, styled by Lord Clarendon "the conservative qualities and ornaments of youth." ²⁷ And in these pursuits so rapid a progress was made, that the tutors of all the three brothers were obliged to restrain the progress of George Villiers in order that their other pupils should not be disheartened by his proficiency. Meantime, his expanding beauty of form and face seemed to his proud mother to render her son worthy of a higher culture than that which she could bestow upon him at Godby. Her jointure was very small, and al-

²⁶ Disparity between Robert Davereux, Earl of Essex, and the Duke of Buckingham, by Lord Clarendon.

²⁷ Ibid.

though Godby, where she resided, was a suitable abode for the widow of Sir George Villiers, the Manor House being large enough to receive James the First and his retinue during a royal progress, yet her poverty obliged her to live in great retirement. A rigid economy must have been necessary to regulate its household. Lady Villiers had only two hundred a-year, both for herself and her family, and that income was to cease at her death, when her orphan children would have but a pittance besides their beauty and their talents.²⁸ Impelled, as it is hinted by several historians, by a desire to benefit her children, the widowed lady, still young and fair, resolved to marry again. Sir Thomas Marquin was first the object of her choice, and after his death, she bestowed her hand upon Sir Thomas Compton, Knight of the Bath, and brother of Lord Compton, First Earl of Northampton, whose marriage with the daughter of Sir John Spencer, Lord Mayor of London, and commonly called "rich Spencer," had brought an increase of honour and influence to his family. This union was the more important to Lady Villiers and her children, because their half-brothers and sisters looked upon them with no good will, and were little disposed to further their interests.

²⁸ Coke's Detection, p. 81.

It was at that time the custom to send our young nobility, and even their inferiors, to France to complete their education. Lady Villiers resolved to afford her son George this advantage. She selected him from her other children partly from partiality, for it is expressly stated that "he who was debarred from his father's estate was happy in his mother's love;"²⁹ and partly on account of his singular beauty of person. He is said, indeed, to have had, when he reached man's estate, "no blemish from head to foot," save that his eyebrows are stated to have been somewhat overpendulous, a defect which some of his admirers thought to be redeemed by the uncommon brilliancy of the eyes which flashed beneath them.³⁰ The Earl of Essex, to whom Villiers is compared, was taller, and of an "abler body" than the favourite of James I. But Villiers had the "neater limbs and freer delivery, he carried his well-proportioned body well, and every movement was graceful." Nor does Lord Clarendon, who thus describes him, think it beneath the dignity of his subject to remark that Villiers "exceeded in the daintiness of his leg and foot," whilst Essex was celebrated for his hands, which, says his panegyrist, though it be but feminine

²⁹ Reliquiæ Wottonianæ.

³⁰ Fuller's Worthies of Leicestershire.

praise, "he took from his father."³¹ The complexion of George Villiers was singularly clear and beautiful, his forehead high and smooth, his eyes dark and full of intelligence and sweetness, whilst the perfect oval of his face, and delicate turn of features, fine, yet noble, and the air of refinement which characterised both his countenance and his bearing, rendered him one of the most attractive of human beings. As he attained to maturity, a peculiar courtesy of manner, a frankness and merriment which diverged at times into a total forgetfulness of forms, a power of throwing off the appearance of all oppressing business and secret cares, although of these he had his share, and of assuming "a very pleasant and vacant face," a love of social life, and certain traits of character, half folly, half romance, won upon everyone that approached him before prosperity had changed courtesy into arrogance, or political intrigues marred the open expression of a physiognomy on which none could look without admiration.

The youth, whose promise, even at a very early age, augured the results which I have anticipated, reached Paris after the death of Henry IV.³²

It was probably in the autumn that Villiers re-

³¹ *Reliquiæ Wottonianæ*, 171.

³² Henry IV. was stabbed by Ravallac on the 14th of May, 1610.

paired to the Continent, since it is expressly stated that he was eighteen when he undertook that journey, and he had not attained that age until August, 1610. It seems, therefore, likely that Villiers beheld France under a strange aspect, that of a universal state of despair. Protestants and Catholics were alike overwhelmed by the recent calamity; the former might well dread a fresh massacre, but the grief of their Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen dispelled that apprehension. The excess of lamentation, expressed somewhat theatrically—the cries of widows and orphans in the streets—the sight of women rushing through the mourners at the funeral, screaming—the orations, interrupted by sobs, in which the virtues of the deceased monarch were panegyricized—these must have ceased before Villiers visited Paris; but the Huguenots still sheltered themselves in the Arsenal, where the great Sully mourned his royal master and friend.³³

In Paris, Villiers remained three years, prose-

³³ The women, in some instances, refused to take food, by way of shewing their grief for the murder of Henry, and even the men gave way to despondency. “*Plusieurs des meilleurs citoyens de la ville,*” says Lacroix; “*se sont sentis frappés du coup de la mort, en apprenant cette nouvelle; d’autres, qui expirent plus lentement, se plaignent de survivre trop long tems a ce bon roi.*”—Lacroix “*Histoire de France,*” pendant les Guerres de Religion, to me iv., p. 385.

cuting his studies, which consisted of French, and the practice of polite and martial exercises. His education tended, indeed, to increase his failings, to heighten his taste for display and love of pleasure, and to weaken his reasoning faculties. He had, according to the acknowledgment of his great partisan, Sir Henry Wotton, "little grammatical foundation;" and French appears to have been the only foreign language that he ever acquired; nevertheless, it is remarkable what application to business he evinced during the last few years of his life; his punctuality in correspondence, and the clear and simple style of his letters, prove how easily his mind might have been trained to higher pursuits than those on which his mother, worldly, but not wise, based her expectations of his future fortunes.

Paris, which Villiers was destined twice to revisit under circumstances very dissimilar to those of his first residence there, was then the resort of foreigners. The youth, who had emerged from the quiet haunts of Goadby Grange, took his first lessons in life in the city which Howell, in his familiar letters, styles, the "huge magazine of men." "Its buildings," says that writer, "were indifferently fair; its streets as foul during all the four seasons of the year; a perpetual current of coaches, carts, and horses encumbering them, narrow and dirty as they were, and were some-

times so entangled that it was an hour or more before they could proceed. In such a stop," as Howell terms it, "was Ravailiacs's fatal opportunity afforded, and the great Henry slain."³⁴ The plague³⁵ settled perpetually in one corner or another of Paris, but Villiers escaped that risk; he returned, apparently exempt from foreign vices, unscathed by a more fearful contagion than the plague; at least, thus may we infer from the assertion of Sir Henry Wotton. "He came home," says that writer, "in his natural plight, without affected forms, the ordinary disease of travellers."³⁶ It may reasonably be presumed that the young man who retains his simplicity of deportment, still possesses a corresponding integrity of character.

Villiers was now twenty-one years old; his accomplishments may shortly be summed up: he was an excellent fencer, an incomparable dancer,

³⁴ "Howell's Familiar Letters," p. 39.

³⁵ It is as well to remind the reader that before the year 1752, the civil or legal year began on the 25th of March (Lady Day), while the historical year began on the 1st of January, for civilians called each day within that period one year earlier than historians. The alteration in the calendar took place by Act of Parliament, on the 2nd day of September, 1752, when it was enacted that the day following should be the 14th instead of the 3rd of September.—
"Nicolas's Notitia Historica."

³⁶ *Reliquiæ Wottonianæ*, p. 209.

he understood the arrangement of costume and the art of dressing well, but those valuable acquirements lay dormant in one who possessed no wardrobe, for he went to France poor, and his family had not been enriched during his absence. Villiers was, in addition to these graces, a perfectly well-bred man. Lord Clarendon describes him to have been "a fair-spoken gentleman, of a sweet and accostable nature." At present, his constitution, which afterwards gave way beneath the pressure of business, or in consequence of the excitements of his dazzling career, was in full vigour. Such was the youth who now returned to gratify his mother's ambitious hopes, by that career to which the efforts of the young aristocracy of England were then chiefly directed. It may be here remarked as singular, that Villiers was trained to no specific profession; he had not been initiated into those elements of learning necessary to qualify him for the church or the bar; he had not served in the army; but was, in fact, literally brought up to follow his fortunes at the Court of James the First. It appears to those in modern times a bold speculation, but the character of the monarch upon whose peculiarities it was based accounts for the scheme, apparently so chimerical, of qualifying a son for nothing better than to depend merely upon the chances of an hour, for, had

opportunity been wanting, the graces and accomplishments of George Villiers might have been for ever concealed, or disregarded.

But it is not improbable that Lady Villiers, especially after her second marriage, had certain dependence upon the exertions of personal friends, through whose agency she trusted to advance her son's interests at Court. From them, too, she probably learned that the disgrace of Somerset was at hand.

When Villiers returned to England, he found no better prospect before him than to pass some time at Goadby, under the "wing and counsel of his mother."³⁷ In this retreat, he had leisure to study the temper of the times, and to view from afar the characteristics of that sphere for which he was destined.

It appears to have been the fashion of the day to rush to London, and to desert those country seats to which James the First and his son Charles endeavoured by proclamations and harangues to restrain the gentry. The innovation was severely reproved by James in the summer of 1616, when he made that memorable speech in the Star Chamber, in which he censured the custom, attributing it, of course, to the wives and daughters of the offenders. "Thus," remarked

³⁷ Sir Henry Wotton.—"Reliquiæ Wottonianæ," p. 208.

James, "do they neglect the country hospitality, and cumber the city." He next complained of the new and sumptuous buildings in the metropolis, of the coaches, lacqueys, and fine clothes in which the higher classes indulged, comparing them to "Frenchmen," or, as if that were not harsh enough, declaring that they "lived miserably in their houses, like Italians, becoming apes to other nations." Finally, he proposed to remedy these evils by an edict of the Star Chamber.

CHAPTER II.

JAMES I., HIS DISAPPROVAL OF THE GENTRY CROWDING INTO LONDON—DISGUST ENTERTAINED BY THE OLD FAMILIES TO HIM AND HIS COURT—THE CLINTONS, BLOUNTS, VERES, AND WILLOUGHBY D'ERESBYS SHOW IT—CHARACTER OF SIR THOMAS LAKE—WILLIAM, EARL OF PEMBROKE, THE EARLY PATRON OF VILLIERS—ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST INTRODUCTION OF VILLIERS TO JAMES—AMBITIOUS VIEWS WHICH IT SUGGESTED—HIS ATTACHMENT TO THE DAUGHTER OF SIR ROGER ASHTON—THEIR ENGAGEMENT BROKEN OFF—ACCOUNT OF THE KING'S VISIT TO CAMBRIDGE IN 1614-15—SOME DESCRIPTION OF THE COURTLY LADIES WHO WERE PRESENT THERE—THE QUEEN'S ABSENCE—COUNTESS OF ARUNDEL—COUNTESS OF SOMERSET—COUNTESS OF SALISBURY—LADY HOWARD OF WALDEN—PERFORMANCE OF THE PLAY OF "IGNORAMUS" IN CLARE HALL—THE DESIGN OF THIS COMEDY TO RIDICULE THE COMMON LAW—ADMIRATION EXPRESSED BY THE KING, DURING THE PERFORMANCE, OF THE PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF VILLIERS, WHO WAS PRESENT—THE SUBSEQUENT REPRESENTATIONS REFERRED TO.

CHAPTER II.

It might be presumed, from this harangue, that never had the Court of James been so magnificent, nor such a throng of the high-born and the opulent clustered in the metropolis as at that time. But the fact was that whilst obscure country gentlemen brought thither their families, the old nobility fled from a court which cherished Somerset and proscribed Raleigh, and where all the real business of the King's life consisted in expedients to raise money in order to support an expenditure from which he derived no dignity. The great and gallant representatives of the Houses of Clinton, Blount, and Willoughby D'Eresby sought in continental countries the meed of honour which was

denied them in the service of their own country by the pacific temper of the King.³⁸ The Tower entombed some of the noblest spirits. There still languished the Earl of Northumberland and the Earl of Wilton; the one beloved, nevertheless, by Henry Prince of Wales, though suspected of being concerned with his kinsman Percy in the Gunpowder Plot; the other a "very hopeful gentleman blasted in the bud," who had been imprisoned since the Raleigh plot. Others prosecuted schemes of discovery; West, Earl of Delawarr, in Virginia, attempted to second Raleigh, and contenting himself with that return and inward satisfaction which a good mind feels in its own consciousness of virtue, died in the undertaking. Others, such as the Earl of Arundel, could not tolerate the vulgar revels, the tasteless prodigality of the Court of James; that nobleman confined himself, therefore, to the splendours of his stately home, for his soul was not that of a patriot, nor had he, says Lord Clarendon, "any other affection for the nation or kingdom than as he has a home in it, in which, like the great Leviathan, he might disport himself."³⁹

Room and opportunity there were, therefore,

³⁸ Quotation from Birch's work on the Colonies. See Brydges' *Peers of England in the Time of James I.*, p. 171.

³⁹ Clarendon's *History of England*, vol. i., p. 55.

for fresh aspirants to compete for royal favour; nevertheless the Earl of Somerset still reigned pre-eminent, and had then been recently promoted to the highest office about the King's person, that of Lord Chamberlain. The reason assigned for this new display of partiality was also such as to prove that Somerset was firmly planted in his sovereign's favour. He succeeded in the high office the Earl of Salisbury, who, as James expressed it, was wont to entertain his royal master with "epigrams, discourses, and learned epistles, and other such nicks and devices." These, the King observed, would pay no debts, and he therefore selected in Somerset, he said, a "plain and honest gentleman, who, if he committed a fault, had not rhetoric enough to excuse it."⁴⁰ It seemed therefore very improbable that Villiers should ever hope to rival one who was so rooted in the King's regard as the Earl of Somerset, but events which no human foresight could have anticipated worked for him in the dark secrecy of a woman's guilty career.

Mature years, precipitated into old age by disease and infirmities, had brought no increase to James of that practical wisdom which regulates a Court as well as a family. His imputed wisdom,

⁴⁰ Nichols's *Progresses of James I.*, vol. iii., page 19, note.

which was so over panegyricized in his own time, and which has been too much depreciated in ours, consisted in shrewd and sensible general notions, which he never seems to have applied to his private benefit.

So that, though the favour of Somerset, when George Villiers returned from France, was in its decline, the King could not be deterred from seeking a new object for his partiality. He might indeed have learned a lesson which should have taught him that he had disgusted the nation and lowered himself by his system of favouritism, yet, after recovering from the perils and vexations of the infamous business which ruined Carr, he had not a notion that it would be wise to profit by experience, and was ready to commence a new career of folly, and to sacrifice all the slender portion of dignity that remained to him—a dignity which consisted chiefly in the general confidence of his subjects towards him—by adopting any new object that might chance to cross his path.

It was during the year of inaction which Villiers passed at Goadby, that he became acquainted with the family of Sir Roger Aston. This knight was the father of four daughters, for one of whom Villiers, in the quiet hours of his country life, conceived an attachment. One might, on a first view of this incident, wonder at the want of cau-

tion in Lady Villiers, in detaining her son at Goadby, there to shackle his future course by an early, and, apparently, unprofitable engagement; but she was not acting, it appears, inconsistently with her schemes of future advancement, when she permitted the intimacy which produced this result. Sir Roger Aston was, it is true, only the base-born son of John Aston, of Aston, in Cheshire;⁴¹ he could, therefore, derive no lustre from that ancient family; he had held formerly the office of barber to King James when in Scotland, where Sir Roger was chiefly educated.⁴² He was, in time, made a groom of the royal chamber, and further promoted to be master of the wardrobe, and, however humble his birth and education may have been, became a person of no inconsiderable influence at Court. During the last twenty years of Elizabeth's reign, he was the continual correspondent of Cecil, whom he supplied with details of all that transpired in Scotland. The powerful minister was not, it appears, ashamed to owe much important information to the former barber, and, fortunately for those who rested upon the good offices of Aston, he is reported to have been a "very honest, plain-dealing

⁴¹ Court of James I., by Dr. Godfrey Goodman, edited by the Rev. T. S. Brewer, vol. i., p. 16.

⁴² Carte's History of England, vol. ii., p. 42.

man, no dissembler, neither did he do any ill office to any man.”⁴³

In addition to these acquired advantages, Sir Roger was enabled to provide his daughters with portions. It may, therefore, be inferred that Lady Villiers—who could never have foreseen that her son would have claimed the hand of an heiress of ducal line, nor have anticipated that those attractions, of which she could but partially calculate the value, should captivate in after times even a royal mistress—approved of the growing affection which sprang up amid the rural scenes of Goadby. It was permitted, indeed, at first, by both the parents, whose interests were concerned in it, and it seems, on the part of the lady, to have been a fervent and disinterested sentiment. But the question of a settlement intervened: Villiers, in consideration of a handsome dower, to which the young damsel was entitled, was required to settle upon her the moderate sum of eighty pounds a-year. The arrangement was impracticable, for all his fortune at that time, and even after he had appeared for some time at Court, amounted to only fifty or sixty pounds annually.⁴⁴

Some opposition to the engagement originated, therefore, with the friends of the young lady,

⁴³ Bishop Goodman, 1, p. 18.

⁴⁴ Carte, vol. ii., p. 43.

though she, passionately enamoured, was at first fixed in her choice, and firm to her professions of affection. "The gentlewoman," says Sir Anthony Weldon, "loved him so well as, could all his friends have made for her great fortune but a hundred marks jointure, she had married him presently, in despite of all her friends, and, no question, would have had him without any fortune at all." But whilst the affair was under consideration, or probably when it was partially concluded, but was still cherished in the minds of the parties most concerned in it, a circumstance occurred which diverted the hopes of Villiers into another direction; a new stimulus was given to the energies of his nature, and ambition, as it is known to have done before, proved mightier than love.

It was at a horse-race in Cambridgeshire that Villiers first attracted the attention of the King. The poverty of the young man was then such that even on this notable occasion, when the sovereign, on his annual progress, was expected, and at a time when the costliness, or, as it was well styled, the "bravery" of dress was at its height, he could not afford any new attire. An "old black suit, broken out in divers places," was, as Sir Symonds D'Ewes asserts,⁴⁵ the garment in which his narrow

⁴⁵ Life of Sir Symonds D'Ewes, edited by Halliwell, vol. i., p. 86.

means constrained him to appear amid the gay courtiers who composed the royal train.

As if this were not a sufficient mortification, other inconveniences arose. The race had taken place near Linton, and most of the company slept at that town. There was no room in the lodgings of the inn for the ill-dressed youth in the old black suit, "and he was obliged," adds the same writer, "and even glad, to lie on a truckle bed in a gentleman's chamber, of mean quality, also, at that time, from whose own mouth I heard this relation, who was himself an eye-witness of it."⁴⁶

According to another account, it was at Apthorpe, whither King James, in the month of August, 1614, had sent his dogs, that the monarch was so struck by the appearance and deportment of Villiers, that he resolved to mould him, as it were "platonically, to his own idea."⁴⁷ The impression produced upon the King was publicly observed by attendants and courtiers, and the success of Villiers was decided. About this time, indeed, Villiers formed an acquaintance upon whose counsels he acted, so as to take the tide of fortune at its height.

Sir Thomas Lake is said to have ushered

⁴⁶ Life of Sir Symonds D'Ewes.

⁴⁷ Reliquiæ Wottonianæ, p. 210; and Nichols's Progresses of James I., vol. iii, p. 19.

Villiers into the English Court,⁴⁸ and there was, perhaps, not one of the subordinate personages better calculated to guide, in that sphere, the first steps of an inexperienced youth than Lake. Patronized originally by Sir Francis Walsingham, and by him recommended to the service of Queen Elizabeth, he had acted as Secretary for the French and Latin tongue to his Royal mistress, and acquired, from his accurate and rapid writing, the name of "Swiftsure." In the Court of Elizabeth, where none but men of ability flourished, he had received his political education. He had enjoyed the Queen's confidence, and was reading to her in French and Latin at the very moment when the Countess of Warwick told him that the Queen had expired. James made him a Privy Counsellor, and afterwards appointed him one of his Secretaries of State.⁴⁹ Lake eventually fell into disgrace, not from his own fault, but owing to the unfortunate marriage of his eldest daughter to the Lord de Ross, son of the Earl of Exeter, and to the subsequent enmity of the Cecils. But at the time when Villiers owed his first introduction to him, Lake was in the height of his influence, and James, even after his downfall, accorded to him the praise that "he was a Min-

⁴⁸ Kennet's History of England," p. 706.

⁴⁹ Fuller's Worthies of Leicestershire.

ister of State fit to serve any greater prince in Europe.”⁵⁰

Under such auspices, Villiers secured the best introduction to the world that can be obtained—that afforded by individuals whose high rank was upheld in public estimation by their personal influence; and it augurs well of the views which were at that time entertained of his character, and of the terms on which it was desired to place him with the King, that those who were real lovers of their country, and patrons of its best interests, should have presented him to their sovereign.

Lucy Harrington, Countess of Bedford, “led him,” says Fuller, “by the one hand, and William, Earl of Pembroke, by the other.”

Few women shone in the giddy revels of the Court with a purer lustre than the Countess of Bedford; her virtues and accomplishments may have been exaggerated by grateful poets and dependants, but they were such as to confer a certain dignity on all whom she countenanced. Hence we must admire the discrimina-

⁵⁰ Fuller's *Worthies of Hants*. There is a curious account of the mysterious affair of the Lakes, in Bishop Goodman's *Court and Times of King James*, vol. i., pp. 193-197; also some letters of Lady Lake's, in the second volume of that work. The State Paper Office contains more upon the same subject, as yet, inedited.

tion of Lake in obtaining for the youthful Villiers the friendship of one whom society estimated so highly. The sister of Sir John Harrington, the Countess of Bedford, resembled her brother in his love of letters, and fortune favoured the full indulgence of her inclinations. By the death of that accomplished brother, she succeeded to two-thirds of his possessions. She had then been married six months to Edward, Earl of Bedford; and, at his decease, which happened in 1627, she was left in the uncontrolled possession of all that nobleman's estates. This proof of her husband's confidence and attachment was not misapplied. The widowed Countess, resembling somewhat the Mrs. Montagu of later times, aimed to be the patroness of poets. Of course her motives have been satirised, and her mode of dispensing her patronage impugned, for there seems to be, in most biographers, a love of decrying lettered women of rank. Grainger, for instance, declares that the Countess of Bedford bought the praise of poets by money, and that they, in return, were lavish of incense.⁵¹ Her taste for gardening has, however, met with more indulgence. Sir William Temple, in his "Gardens of Epicurus," praises her "most perfect picture of a garden" at Moor Park, in

⁵¹ Grainger's Biography.

Surrey, for she was, in truth, the first improver of the English flower-garden—an honourable distinction. Her education was in conformity with the practice of the day; she was well read in classics, and had a knowledge of ancient medals. Such was the lady-patroness of Villiers. To her Ben Jonson inscribed three of his epigrams:⁵² to her Dr. Donne addressed several poems, whilst Daniel celebrated her in verse.

It is singular that no relics have been discovered of this far-famed lady's writings, though numerous allusions are made to them in the works of others. A marvellous degree of uncertainty even attends many points of her career; the place of her death is unknown; and she left behind her no will; the abode on which she spent large sums is long since levelled to the ground; this was Burleigh-on-the Hill, which she sold, eventually, to Villiers, when in the height of his fortunes; he erected a noble mansion upon it, but it was destroyed in the time of the Rebellion. Thus, as Mr. Lodge observes, "she has left, by a singular fatality, as it should seem, a splendid reputation, which can neither be

⁵² He addresses her in one of these in the following terms:—

"Lucy, you brightness of our sphere, who are "
 Life of the Muses' day, their Morning Star;
 If works [not authors] their own grace should look,
 Whose poems would not wish to be your books?"

supported nor depreciated by the evidence of historical facts.”⁵³

Less exclusive, more patriotic, and far more popular even than the great Earl of Arundel, William, Earl of Pembroke, stood, on that day, on the same vantage ground with that lofty nobleman, the pre-eminence of character. Pembroke, however, was beloved as well as respected; he was pious, liberal, honourable; a lover of literature and the arts: he encouraged the ingenious and the learned, not only because he delighted in their society, but from a higher motive, a sense of duty to the community. He inherited, indeed, that generous spirit which ennobles the noble, for he was the nephew of Sir Philip Sydney, and the son of that Countess of Pembroke whom Ben Jonson has termed “the subject of all verse.” He was brave and honourable; his abilities were excellent; his character above all suspicion of the ordinary insincerity of courtiers. His immense fortune was employed worthily, not lavished, for his expenses were limited only by his “great mind,” and occasions, to use it nobly. His personal qualities were such as to make even the Court itself respectable, and “better esteemed in the country,” and he had the happiness, in spite of envy, to have more friends than any public character of his time

⁵³ Lodge's Historical Portraits, Art Lucy Harrington.

No man dared to avow himself the enemy of one who was beloved equally at the Court of James and in the retirement of a home circle at Wilton; who sought for neither office nor honours, and yet was lenient to the faults from which his noble nature was exempt.

Such was the nobleman who took by the hand a poor youth, whose present integrity and innocence might, he perhaps believed, vanquish the degrading influence of Somerset and his wife, to whose fame report already attached the darkest rumours. In the patron who was moved to second by his well-earned influence the fortunes of an obscure country youth, Villiers was thus no less fortunate than in the favour of Lucy Harrington. Happy had it been for him had he modelled his own conduct and rectified his notions by the standards now placed before his view; for there was nothing in the bearing of Pembroke to lower the dignity of virtue. That nobleman had been termed "the very picture and *viva effigies* of nobility."⁵⁴ In person, majestic, in his manners, full of stately gravity, which characterised him, whether in repose or when animated, his easy wit, free from every taint of malice, his habitual, unconscious good-breeding, might have assisted that young and unformed mind in the

⁵⁴ Clarendon, vol. i., p. 85; also, Lodge's Portraits.

formation of good taste, a property which rarely flourishes without the aid of refined associates. Some defects there were, and those of a vital nature, which, in looking closely into any character of that time, cannot but be discovered. These were materially owing to the bartering marriages of the middle and early modern times—the selling one's dearest hopes and interests in this life for an estate, or an honour, or a reversion. The standard of morality was, of course, lowered, as it still is in France, by the excuse that fidelity to a wife could hardly be expected under the circumstances of enforced unions, sometimes contracted while the parties were children. William, Earl of Pembroke, was one of the many who exhibited this doctrine in his practice. United to an heiress, for whose fortune even the grave Lord Clarendon observes, he paid “too dear by taking her person into the bargain,”⁵⁵ he devoted himself publicly to Christian, the daughter of Lord Bruce, afterwards Countess of Devonshire. To her he addressed those beautiful lines which were, with other poems, edited by Dr. Donne, prefixed with a fulsome dedication to the Countess.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Clarendon, vol. i., p. 85; also, Lodge's Portraits.

⁵⁶ Peck's *Desiderata Curiosa*, xiv., p. 541; Grainger's *Biographical History of England*, Art. Pembroke.

To Pembroke, Buckingham was, perhaps, indebted for that love of the arts and taste for building and embellishments which afterwards distinguished the lordly proprietor of York House and Burleigh. It is, however, painful to reflect that not three years after the good offices performed by Lord Pembroke to Villiers, a coolness took place upon some matters of little moment compared with the debt of gratitude due to the Earl by the favourite.⁵⁷

Notwithstanding the countenance of the Countess of Bedford, and of the Earl of Pembroke, those who detailed the smallest incidents of the Court observed that the favour of Villiers appeared to be stationary; even his appointment as a Groom of the Bedchamber was deferred in

⁵⁷ The death of this nobleman was remarkable. It had been foretold by his tutor and Lady Davis that he should not outlive his fiftieth birthday. The fatal day arrived; it found his Lordship very "pleasant and healthful," and he supped that evening at the Countess of Bedford's; he was then heard to remark that he should never trust a lady prophetess again. He went to bed in the same good spirits; but was carried off by a fit of apoplexy in the night. Before his interment it was resolved to embalm his body; when one of the surgeons plunged his knife into it, the Earl is said by a tradition in the family to have lifted up one of his hands. The Lady Davis, who had foretold the death of this nobleman, was imprisoned for some time. The Earl died in 1630.

favour of one Carr, a baseborn kinsman of the Earl of Somerset; and it began to be thought that the King's preference for Villiers was declining.⁵⁸ But the game was begun—the hopes of future power, of wealth, perhaps of rank, cherished by maternal counsels, were now working upon the mind of the young adventurer, and he resolved upon one sacrifice to obtain the objects at which he grasped—the sacrifice was, his youthful attachment to old Sir Roger Aston's daughter.⁵⁹

As it often happens, the relinquishment of fondly-cherished hopes was owing, in part, to the advice of a friend: the disposition of Villiers was naturally so generous, that, to abandon all his pretensions to one who was willing to forego the gifts of fortune for his sake, would, probably, not otherwise have occurred to his mind. It happened, however, that whilst he was lingering about the Court, a young companion, Sir Robert Graham, one of the Gentlemen of the Bedchamber, professed himself to be greatly interested in his advancement. Villiers soon constituted Graham his “familiar friend,” and, being brought into what Sir Henry Wotton terms “intrinsical society”

⁵⁸ Inedited letter in the State Paper Office, from Mr. Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carlton, September 22nd, 1619.

⁵⁹ Letter from Mr. Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carlton, November, 1614, given in Nichols's Progresses of James I., vol. iii., p. 26.

with him, was naturally led to speak of his hopes and fears, and to unfold to the young courtier, who could boast more experience than he might pretend to possess, his projected marriage. That bond was disapproved of by Graham. "I know not," remarks Wotton, "what luminaries he spied in his face;" but they were, at all events, sufficient to indicate success at Court. Impressed with this conviction, Graham dissuaded Villiers from his love-match, and encouraged him rather to "woo fortune," by still further improving the King's favourable sentiments towards him. It is not improbable that Graham was the tool of that party who earnestly desired Somerset's downfall, and who gladly availed themselves of the attractions of young Villiers to accomplish their desires. The advice given by Graham "sank," it is said, into the young man's "fancy." He may have remembered the auspicious meeting at Abthorpe, when, in his old black suit, he had charmed even the regard of a Monarch who rarely dispensed with the display of costly garments in others, how slovenly soever he might, in his royal pleasure, be in his own attire. A love-suit to a country damsel, richly endowed, even if fond and faithful, seemed but a poor exchange for a courtly career. Villiers, therefore, wavered; and perhaps

the obstacles thrown in his way by the Aston family added to his irresolution. It is probable, too, that the prospect of aiding hereafter his many relations and connections may have had an influence over his decision. How great the struggle may have been, must be left to the imagination, for no documents are at hand to reveal it. The step was momentous; for it threw upon the world, to buffet with all the turmoils of a conspicuous station, a man who, otherwise, would probably have lived and died in respectable obscurity, existing upon his wife's fortune.

Villiers, however, in time, adopted the advice of Sir Robert Graham. He abjured the thoughts of an early marriage, and devoted himself to ambition.⁶⁰

An opportunity was soon found of bringing him again before the King, under a more advantageous aspect than in his black suit, and those who sought his advancement henceforth supplied him with the means of appearing conformably to the fashion of the day, by affording him a present income far above his poor patrimonial inheritance.⁶¹ Thus assisted, the young man prepared to meet the King at Cambridge, where, in the month of March,

⁶⁰ *Reliquiæ Wottonianæ*, p. 210.

⁶¹ Fuller's *Worthies of Leicestershire*.

1614–15, the honour of a royal visit was conferred upon that University.

The influence of the Somerset family had, in a great measure, procured this distinction to Cambridge, in preference to Oxford; for the Earl of Suffolk, the father of the Countess of Somerset, had been chosen Chancellor of Cambridge during the preceding year;⁶² and to honour this nobleman, —who had also been recently constituted Lord Treasurer, an office from which he was eventually degraded—James announced that he purposed to fulfil an intention which he had held for some years, but had deferred, as the good fortune of Villiers decreed, until this critical period. For a powerful cabal was now concentrated against the hateful sway of this branch of the Howard family, and Villiers was the anchor on which the hopes of the adverse party rested.

On the seventh day of the month, King James made his entry into Cambridge with as much solemnity and as great a concourse of “gallants and great men as the hard weather and extremely foul ways would permit.” He was accompanied by Prince Charles, who had previously visited the

⁶² 1613. To the sagacity of the Earl of Suffolk, and not to that of James I., was the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot ascribed. See Winwood's Memorials, vol. ii., p. 186.

University; and these royal personages were met at the boundaries of the town by the Corporation, and welcomed by the Recorder with an address setting forth the loyalty of the Mayor and Burgeses of Cambridge, and insisting upon the antiquity of the town, which "was builded 'as historians testifie, and as these worthy personages now certified,' before Christ's Incarnation, with a castle, tower, and walls of defence, by Duke Cantaber." "The Muses," pursued the Recorder, "did branch from Athens to Cambridge, and were lovinglie lodged in the houses of citizens until ostles and halls were erected for them without endowments." Two cups were then presented, one to the King, the other to Prince Charles, who was addressed as "a peerless and most noble Prince, our morning starre," and the procession moved onwards.⁶³ Among the gallants who followed through the "foul ways" of the outskirts of the town was George Villiers, no longer in his black and worn suit, but decked out with all the advantages which the pride and ambition of his mother could command. It is worthy of remark that at that time a plan for forming a public library at Cambridge, similar to that at Oxford, was entertained by the Heads of the College. The scheme was abandoned until many years afterwards, when

⁶³ Winwood's Memorials, vol. ii., p. 48.

it was adopted by the very youth who passed along amid a throng of others far more wealthy and important than himself, when he was himself Chancellor of the University.⁶⁴

The whole body of the collegians was drawn out in their appropriate costume, in order to receive the King. From some of the regulations for this occasion, it appears that the habits of the University were not at that time the most refined, nor their taste in attire the most modest. It was found necessary not only to forbid the graduates, scholars, and students of the University to frequent ale-houses and taverns during His Majesty's sojourn, but also not to presume to take tobacco in St. Marie's Church, or in Trinity College Hall "upon pain of expulsion." These young gentlemen, too, were prone to indulge themselves in strange "pekadivelas, vast bands, huge cuffs, shoe-roses, tufts, locks, and topps of hair," unbecoming that modesty and carriage suitable to the students of so renowned a University, and it was therefore determined to enforce the dress fixed by Statute, upon a penalty of 6s. 8d. for every default; and in case of con-

⁶⁴ It was checked by the death of the Duke of Buckingham, whose project had been to erect a Library between the Regent's Walk and Caius College. See Nichols's Progresses, p. 40, note.

tempt of this warning, of a month's imprisonment.⁶⁵ Thus restricted, the undergraduates and their superiors appeared in all the advantage of academic attire, and the King and his youthful son, passing through their well-disciplined ranks, proceeded to Trinity College, where they were domiciled.

One or two circumstances were wanting, nevertheless, to complete the magnificence of this reception:—the first was the presence of the Queen, who was not invited—an omission for which the Chancellor, and not the University, was blamed—another, the scarcity of ladies, there being only seven present, and those entirely of the Howard family. Such was the pride or policy of that haughty and rapacious faction.

The Countess of Arundel, wife of Philip, Earl of Arundel, the half-brother of the Chancellor, was one of the seven present on that occasion. She was scarcely less exalted as the wife of the great Earl of Arundel, than as the daughter of Gilbert, Earl of Shrewsbury, Earl Marshal of England, whose co-heiress she was. Not only were her possessions large, but her virtues great; she was beloved for her excellence of character and conjugal virtues. Upon this lady's brow, as she passed along, a cloud of sadness may perhaps have been

⁶⁵ Nichols's Progresses, p. 45.

traced for the loss of her son, James, Lord Maltravers, a young nobleman of great promise, whose death, happening a few years previously, she had incessantly deplored. By her side came the Lady Elizabeth Grey, her sister.

The Countess of Suffolk was, of course, an object of considerable attention. This lady was the second wife of the Chancellor, and was equally celebrated for her beauty and her rapacity. At the time of her marriage with the Earl of Suffolk she was a widow, having been united to the eldest son of Lord Rich. Her birth was not noble, but she had inherited a portion of the estate of her father, Sir Henry Knevit, a Wiltshire Knight. The Countess acquired a great ascendancy over her husband, and there is too much reason to suppose that he succumbed to the influence of her talents and her beauty, and, although he did not share in the fruits of her peculation, permitted her to indulge her avarice. So notorious were the bribes of which this lady accepted, that Lord Bacon compared her to an exchange woman who kept a shop, in which Sir John Bingley exclaimed "What do ye lack?" At length the small-pox destroyed the beauty which had been so fatal to the Countess's peace and honour, and which had wrought much misery and disgrace to all who yielded to its influence.

But if the career of this busy female courtier were reprehensible, that of her young and beautiful daughter, the Countess of Somerset, who accompanied her mother that day, was tinged with guilt of a far deeper dye. It is difficult, in modern times, to realise to one's mind two such women—the one availing herself of her high station and her personal attractions to enrich her family at the expense of every delicate sentiment and lofty principle; the other infuriated by a mad passion, until every womanly attribute departed, and the vengeance of a fiend alone characterised her dark career. The Countess of Somerset was, at this time, still in the bloom of her youth, being about twenty-four years of age, and the crimes which afterwards brought infamy and retribution on her, were then known only to her corrupt and remorseless heart. The Court, to use the expression of a contemporary historian, “was her nest, and she was hatched up by her mother, whom the sour breath of the age had already tainted, from whom the young lady might take such a tincture, that ease, greatness, and Court glories would more disdain and impress on her, than any way wear out and diminish.” Such was the loveliness of this guilty woman, that those who saw her face might, it has been said, “challenge nature for harbouring so wicked a

heart under so sweet and bewitching a countenance :”⁶⁶ nor were the arts fashionable at the time forgotten ; they heightened the attractions of the Countess of Somerset. “All outward adornments,” we are told, “to present beauty in her full glory, were not wanting ;” among the rest, yellow starch, “the invention and foyl of jaundiced complexions, with great cut-work bands and piccadillies,” were adopted by the unhappy Lady Somerset, and were, doubtless, produced on this, as upon other festive occasions.

The Countess of Suffolk and her retinue proceeded to Magdalen College, which had been founded by Lord Chancellor Audley, the grandfather of the Earl of Suffolk.⁶⁷

The youngest daughter of the Earl of Suffolk accompanied her sister and mother. This was Catherine, married to William Cecil, second Earl of Salisbury. By this union long enmities between the two families of Howard and of Percy were partially reconciled ; a daughter of the house of Cecil marrying eventually Algernon

⁶⁶ Wilson’s *Reign of James I.*, p. 63.

⁶⁷ Lord Audley is said to have given this College the name of Magdalen, or rather Maudley, in allusion to his own name, adding one letter at the beginning and at the end. M AUDLEY N. See Nichols’s *Progresses*, p. 45, note.

Percy, Earl of Northumberland, "whose blood," it had been said by the Earl of Salisbury, "would not mingle in a basin," so inborn was the hereditary hatred between the two races. This union had been one of policy alone; for the Earl of Salisbury inherited no traits of his ancestry but their titles; and his weak and abject nature revived the remembrance of only the worst parts of his father's character; "a man," adds Clarendon, who sums up the whole, "of no words, except in hunting and hawking."

Lady Howard of Walden, the daughter of George Hume, Earl of Dunbar, and wife of the eldest son of the Earl of Suffolk, and Lady Howard, the wife of Thomas, Lord Howard of Charlton, his second son, completed the family array. The latter of these two ladies was a Cecil, but her claims to celebrity rest chiefly upon her being the mother of Lady Elisabeth Howard, who married the great Dryden; her two sons, Sir Robert and Edward Howard, enjoyed some portion of literary fame in their day.⁶³

The first night's entertainment at Cambridge was a comedy, acted by the gowmsmen of St. John's College. This was a sort of burlesque, ridiculing Sir Edward Radcliffe, the King's physician; it proved, according to public opinion, but

⁶³ Brydges's *Peers of England*, p. 260.

“a lean argument, and though it was larded with pretty shows at the beginning and end, and with somewhat too broad speech for such a presence, still it was dry.”

On the following evening there was performed in Clare Hall the famous play of “Ignoramus” a burlesque. This production was attributed to George Buggle, a Fellow of Clare Hall. It was written and spoken in Latin, nor was it even printed at the time when it agitated the polite and learned society by which its points and satire were so keenly enjoyed. The manuscript was, it appears, destroyed; and it was not until ten years after the death of its reputed author that it was thought prudent to print it, having been taken down from the mouth of the author. The design of this popular comedy was to ridicule the Common Law, and no one enjoyed the satire more than the august individual whose office it was to uphold the laws. Never, it has been said, did anything fascinate the King’s attention or suit his taste so much as this representation, and he commanded several repetitions by the same performers. “Ignoramus” was not, however, readily forgiven or forgotten by that body whom it attacked; and, whilst the King and his Court derived the most lively pleasure from its mingled invective and burlesque, the lawyers were greatly offended by its pungent

satire. Successive publications afterwards appeared, taxing the justice of this attack upon the legal profession, and written with much bitterness.

During the performance of this play, the King's attention was not, however, wholly riveted upon "Ignoramus" and his associates; among the audience in Clare Hall, George Villiers, decorated with all the care that his mother's pride and affection could suggest, appeared, resplendent in beauty. "The King," to use the expression of a contemporary writer, "fell into admiration of him," so that he became confounded between his delight at the appearance of Villiers and the pleasure of the play. To both of these contending emotions, James, with his usual absence of dignity, gave a free expression. "This," says Roger Coke, "set the heads of the courtiers at work how to get Somerset out of favour, and to bring Villiers in."⁶⁹

Ample time was permitted during the tedious performance for the King to observe the young adventurer who sought his favour, and for busy politicians to build upon the absurd partiality of the weak old King. The representation of "Ignoramus," with its dull pedantic jests, and its personalities, long since passed away and forgot-

⁶⁹ Coke's Detention, p. 82.

ten, lasted eight hours; the second time it commenced at eight in the evening, and was not concluded until one in the morning.

The performers were chiefly Fellows of Clare Hall and of Queen's College, and their efforts met with the greatest applause. Thus, in Bishop Corbet's "Grave Poem," written in 1614, to celebrate the occasion, it is said:—

Nothing did win more praise of mine,
Than did these actors, most divine.

And, alluding to the clerical character of these much-approved individuals, he adds:—

Their play had sundry wise factors,
A perfect diocess of actors
Upon the stage, for I am sure that
There was both bishop, pastor, curate,
Nor was their labour light and small,
The charge of some was pastoral.⁷⁰

Several of the younger men who figured on the stage of Clare Hall were associated in their subsequent career with some of the most important events of the period in which they lived. At the last hour, a boy of thirteen was called upon to act the part of Surda, in which it was necessary to assume female attire. This youth was, even at that early age, an undergraduate; and he was thus summoned hastily to learn a new part in ad-

⁷⁰ Nichols's Progress of James I., vol. iii., p. 70.

dition to that of Venica, which had been allotted to him, from the scruples of his tutor, the Rev. Mr. Fairclough, who had been selected to undertake the character of Surda on account of his low stature; but Mr. Fairclough was a Puritan, and, deeming it a species of deception to wear women's clothes, abjured the degrading task. The boy who now supplied his place was Spencer Compton, afterwards Lord Compton, an early favourite and attendant of Charles I., whom he accompanied into Spain. His loyal exertions in the cause of his unfortunate master shed, in after life, honour upon his name. Mr. Fairclough was not the only person who objected to lower the dignity of man's estate by the assumption of a woman's gown. The Head of Emmanuel College, then esteemed a Puritanical house, objected also to one of its undergraduates accepting the part of a girl; but these scruples were overruled by the guardian of the youth.⁷¹

⁷¹ Sir Walter Mildmay, the founder of Emmanuel College, being at the Court of Queen Elizabeth, she said to him:—"Sir Walter, I hear you have erected a Puritan Foundation." "No, madam," he replied; "far be it from me to countenance anything contrary to your established laws; but I have set an acorn, and when it becomes an oak, God alone knows what will be the fruit thereof."—Fuller's *History of Cambridge*, p. 147.

In the "Grave Poem" of Bishop Corbet, Emmanuel College is thus satirised:—

But th' poor house of Emmanuel
Would not be like proud Jesabel,
Nor shew herself before the King,
An hypocrite, or painted thing;
[And images she would have none,
For fear of superstition, or]
But that the ways might seem more fair,
Conceived a tedious mile of prayer.⁷²

The plot of "Ignoramus" was borrowed from the Trappolaria of Giamballista Porta, an Italian dramatist, but the characters were taken from life. "Ignoramus" was designed to personify Mr. Francis Brakyn, the Recorder of Cambridge, who had rendered himself obnoxious to the University in a dispute about precedence between the Mayor of the town and the Vice-Chancellor. Mr. Brakyn was a barrister, and the ridicule cast upon him was as much enjoyed by the dignified heads of houses as by noisy undergraduates.*

Amongst the performers was John Cole, afterwards Earl of Clare, distinguished for his

⁷² Nichols's Progresses, vol. iii., p. 67.

* A list of the *dramatis personæ* in the play of "Ignoramus" is preserved in Emmanuel College; it was once in the possession of Archbishop Sancroft; and an elaborate edition of the play, with valuable notes, has been printed by T. S. Hawkins.

moderation in the Civil Wars. The youth who was nearly being precluded from acting by the tutors of Emmanuel College, was the Rev. John Towers, afterwards Bishop of Peterborough, one of the twelve loyal Prelates imprisoned by Parliament. Fuller says of him, "He was a great actor when young, and a great sufferer when old, dying rich only in children and patience." "Ignoramus" was translated into English in the year 1678, and a mutilated version of it was produced at the Royal Theatre in the same year, called the "English Lawyer." This was written by Edward Ravenscroft.⁷³

Another play, entitled "Albumazar," followed the successful representation of "Ignoramus;" this, and a Latin pastoral, were the "action or invention of Trinity College, and met with a gracious approval from the King, who, even at his repasts, was now heard loudly to extol Cambridge above Oxford; and yet an awkward incident occurred during the royal visit. During the acts and disputations, in which James delighted, the University orator addressed Prince Charles, who stood beside his father, as Prince Jacobissime Carole;" it was also said that he called him Jacobule, too, which, observed an eye-witness, "neither pleased the King nor anybody else."⁷⁴

⁷³ Nichols's Progresses of James I., vol. iii., p. 50.

⁷⁴ Nichols's Progresses, vol. iii., p. 59.

Buckingham, who possibly understood no Latin, must have found the dramas, the pastoral, the acts and disputations insufferably tedious; but he was now the tool of a party, and therefore, doubtless, remained to witness all these various exhibitions, little dreaming that one day he was to be installed Chancellor of that very University. Dark and contemptuous looks were discerned on the faces of sundry jealous Oxonians, who had gone to see and to ridicule their rivals, the Cambridge men, who were continually, as a contemporary relates, "applauding themselves, and the Oxford men as fast condemning and detracting all that was done."⁷⁵ The best comment upon the exploits of the boastful collegians was that returned by Mr. Corbet, afterwards Bishop Corbet, who, "being seriously dealt withal by some friends to say what he thought, answered that he had left his malice and judgment at home, and came thither only to commend."⁷⁶

King James, however, expressed such unqualified admiration of what he saw, that fears were entertained by those who had had to entertain him that he would have repeated his visit privately; apprehensions were felt also lest he

⁷⁵ Nichols's Progresses. Letter from Mr. Chamberlain to Mr. D. Carleton, State Papers, Domestic, James I.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

should order the performers of the "Ignoramus," a band chiefly composed of ghostly preachers and learned bachelors of divinity, to repair to London; but the panic was groundless, and neither of these dreaded events took place. Great, indeed, was the expense of the reception and provision considered suitable to the grandeur of the occasion. Nor was it long before events still more ruinous to the Earl of Suffolk and his family than their enormous expenditure to grace the King's visit at Cambridge scandalized the public mind. The jealousy of the Earl of Somerset was now aroused by the favour shown at Court to his young rival. Slight occurrences warned the sinking favourite of his own unpopularity. An entertainment was given at Baynard's Castle by three great families—those of Herbert, Hertford, and Bedford; as the company were repairing to the appointed place, they discerned Somerset's portrait hanging out of a limner's shop. Sanderson, the historian, who happened to be a bystander, took occasion to inquire "on what score that was done?" The reply was, "that this meeting at Baynard's Castle was to discover;" for there it appears the scheme to elevate Villiers was concocted by those who viewed with disgust the ascendancy of Somerset.

CHAPTER III.

THE FASCINATION OF VILLIER'S CHARACTER AS OPPOSED TO THE VENALITY OF SOMERSET—LORD CLARENDON'S OPINION—THE FRIENDSHIP OF ARCHBISHOP ABBOT—CHARACTER OF THE PRIMATE—HIS AFFECTION FOR VILLIERS — ANECDOTE OF VILLIERS WHEN CUP-BEARER—HE IS BEFRIENDED BY ANNE OF DENMARK — BY HER MEANS KNIGHTED—SINGULAR SCENE IN THE QUEEN'S CHAMBER—JEALOUSY OF SOMERSET—INGRATITUDE AFTERWARDS SHEWN BY VILLIERS TO ABBOT—ABBOT COMMITS MANSLAUGHTER—IS PAR-DONED BY THE KING—THE INCESSANT PLEASURES OF THE COURT—HORSE-RACING—BEN JONSON'S "GOLDEN AGE RESTORED"—ALLUSION IN IT TO SOMERSET, AND TO OVERBURY — AN ANGRY INTERVIEW BETWEEN VILLIERS AND SOMERSET—VILLIERS SUPPLANTS THE FAVOURITE—HE USES NO UNFAIR MEANS TO DO SO—DISCOVERY OF SOMERSET'S GUILT BY WINWOOD, WHO FINDS PROOFS OF IT IN AN OLD TRUNK—SOMERSET'S DOWNFALL—BACON'S LETTER TO VILLIERS—VILLIERS CONTINUES TO PROFIT BY THE DELINQUENCIES AND DISGRACE OF SOMERSET.

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CHAPTER III.

INTRODUCED, as he now found himself, into the atmosphere of a Court, Buckingham retained the free and joyous spirit, the boyish impetuosity, the incapability of dissimulation which characterised him during the whole of his life. The combination of "English familiarity and French vivacity" have in his deportment been happily expressed by Hume. The carelessness of consequences, which was a part of his variable and fascinating character, was soon perceived by his friends, soon made the theme of comment on the part of his enemies.

To those who had long deplored the rapacity of Somerset, and who viewed, in the depravity of the Court, the degradation of the nation, the very imprudence of Villiers, coupled, as it was, with great courage, quick perceptions, energy, and

a capability of being aroused to high designs and "lofty aspirations,"⁷⁷ must have been refreshing. "As yet," says Lord Clarendon, "he was the most rarely accomplished the Court had ever beheld; while some that found inconvenience in his nearness, intending by some affront to discountenance him, perceived he had masked under the gentleness of a terrible courage as could safely protect all his sweetness." The rise of this gifted and fascinating adventurer, rapid as it undoubtedly was, was obstructed by various obstacles, the details of which are not to be found in the ordinary narratives of his career.

Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury, held at this time a supreme influence both in Church and in State affairs. His great learning, his eloquence, his moderation, and his indefatigable exertions for the public welfare procured him at once the confidence of the country and the goodwill of his sovereign. By his conciliatory deportment, Abbot, when he held the appointment of chaplain to the Earl of Dunbar, Treasurer of Scotland, effected such an understanding as to ensure the establishment of the Episcopal order in that country. He was also one of the eight divines at Oxford to whom the charge of translating the New

⁷⁷ See the Character of Buckingham in Disraeli's Commentaries on Charles I., vol. ii., p. 163.

Testament, with the exception of the Epistles, was entrusted.⁷⁸ Thus qualified for the highest station in his sacred profession, Abbot had attained the rare art of satisfying all parties. His zeal for the Protestant faith secured the esteem of the Calvinist, and his devotion to the order to which he belonged satisfied even the disciples of Laud.

This prelate now became the patron of George Villiers. Perhaps the fearless, open disposition of the youth interested the Archbishop, who was by no means an austere churchman, but who mingled to a great extent in secular affairs, and united a love of popular diversions with his saintly zeal and real piety of character;—enjoyed a day's hunting, and regulated alternately the concerns of foreign nations and the disputes of controversialists. Archbishop Abbot appears to have fostered Villiers as a son. A circumstance shortly occurred which showed how necessary to the well-being of the rash youth such a protector and counsellor must have proved.

Villiers now held the office of cup-bearer, and, since it was purchased, as most offices in that reign were, it is probable that those who promoted his rise, from a hatred of the Earl of Somerset, supplied him with the means of thus drawing near to his sovereign at the social board; nor was the

⁷⁸ *Biographia Britannica*.

office in those days, when James was frequently in a state of inebriation, a sinecure.

One day, Villiers happened to take by mistake the upper end of the board instead of another attendant. The person whom he had thus superseded was a creature of Somerset's; Villiers was told of his error in an offensive manner, and removed from his post. Incensed afterwards by a second instance of incivility, he lost his self-control, and gave his brother cup-bearer a blow. By the custom of the Court, Villiers thus made himself liable to have his hand cut off; and Somerset, who was Lord Chamberlain, was bound by his office to see that penalty inflicted. It may readily be conceived with what alacrity Somerset would have fulfilled this part of his duty, but the King interposed, and pardoned Villiers, "who henceforth," remarks an historian, "was regarded as a budding favourite, and appeared like a proper palm beside the discerning spirit of the King, who first cherished him, through his innate virtue, that surprised all men."⁷⁹

It was however necessary that the merits of Villiers should be unfolded to the Queen. Anne of Denmark, although apparently slighted by her royal husband, exercised so considerable a control over his actions that he

⁷⁹ Sanderson's *Life of James I.*, pp. 45 and 457.

never, according to the testimony of Archbishop Abbot, "would admit anyone to nearness about himself but such a one as the Queen should commend unto him, and had made some suit on his behalf." Nor did this wholly proceed from a reverence for Her Majesty's judgment. It was the result of the mingled weakness of conduct and duplicity which characterised James, forming a strong contrast with his real ability and acquirements; the absence of good sense and good taste were equally conspicuous in all he did in private life; but he was cunning enough to desire that if he made a false step the blame should rest upon his Queen. His motive in desiring her approval was that, if she were ill treated by the favourite, he might have the power of saying to her, "You were the party that commended him to me." "Our old master," remarks Archbishop Abbot, "took delight in things of this nature."⁸⁰

Queen Anne had previously been solicited in behalf of Villiers, but in vain; Abbot was, however, successful in his application. For some time, indeed, the Queen answered him in these terms: "My lord, you and your friends know not what you ask, for if this young man be brought in, the first persons that he will plague will be you that labour for him. Yea, I shall have my part

⁸⁰ Rushworth's Collections, vol. i., pp. 460 and 461.

also; the King," added the wary Queen, "will teach him to despise and hardly entreat us, that he may seem to be beholden to no one but himself."

"Noble Queen," exclaimed Abbot, when, after experiencing the hollowness of Court favour and the ingratitude of Buckingham, he wrote the narrative of these incidents, "how like a prophetess did you speak!" Upon the compliance of the Queen, it was resolved to introduce Villiers to the King, for the double honour of being appointed one of His Majesty's Gentlemen of the Bedchamber, and of receiving knighthood. The day was approaching, when Villiers fell ill, not without suspicion of having taken the small-pox. This happened when all his friends were "casting about" how to make him a great man. On the twenty-third of April* he was, however, sufficiently recovered for the good offices of his party to take effect.

The event was accomplished in the following manner:—The Queen and Prince being in the King's bedchamber, it was contrived that Villiers,⁸¹ who was near, should be summoned on some pretext, and when the "Queen saw her own time, he was asked in." "Then," says an histo-

⁸¹ State Paper, Domestic, 1616. Letter from Mr. Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton.

* 1615.

rian, "did the Queen speak to the Prince to draw out the sword and to give it her; and immediately, with the sword drawn, she kneeled to the King, and humbly beseeched His Majesty to do her that especial favour as to knight this noble gentleman, whose name was George, for the honour of St. George, whose feast was now kept. The King at first seemed to be afraid that the Queen should come too near him with a naked sword, but then he did it very joyfully, and it might very well be that it was his own contriving, for he did much please himself with such inventions."⁸²

It must have been a strange scene, for Somerset, who was at hand, entreated of the King that his rival might only be made a Groom of the Chamber; but Abbot, and others whom the Archbishop does not name, stood at the door and plied the Queen with messages that she would "perfect her work, and cause him to be made a gentleman," and Her Majesty, as we have seen, prevailed. Nor were these honours, in the case of Villiers, attended with the expense which usually lessened their value; on the contrary, a pension of

⁸² See Nichols's *Progresses*, vol. iii., p. 80. By a page in that work, it appears that Villiers' appointment to the Royal Chambers, and his being knighted, took place on successive days, the ceremony of knighthood being performed at Somerset House.

a thousand pounds was added to maintain the dignity of knighthood.⁸³

The termination of this incident, so important in the life of Villiers, is related by Archbishop Abbot; Villiers at this time called him "father." The professions which he made to his reverend patron were then doubtless sincere; but gratitude was not the only good seed which political feuds and evil counsels stifled in the breast of Villiers.

"George," relates the prelate, "went in with the King, but no sooner he got loose but he came forth unto me into the Privy Gallery, and there embraced me. He professed that he was so infinitely bound unto me, that all his life long he must honour me as his father; and now he did beseech me, that I would give him some lessons how he should carry himself." These lessons were three in number:—first, to pray daily to God to bless the King his master, and to give him grace studiously to serve and please him. The second was, that he should do all good offices between the King and the Queen, the King and the Prince. The third, that he should fill his master's ears with nothing but the truth. These excellent instructions were afterwards repeated to James, who observed that they were "instructions worthy of an archbishop to give to a young man."

⁸³ Life of Bishop Goodman, vol. i., p. 223.

For some time, an affection, on the one hand expressed in parental terms, and gratitude on the other, continued. "And now, my George," wrote the Archbishop, "because, out of your kind affection to me, you style me your father, I will from this day forward repute and esteem you for my son, and so hereafter you know yourself to be; and in token thereof I do now give you my blessing again, and charge you, as my son, daily to serve God, to be diligent and pleasing to your master, and to be wary that at no man's instance you press him with many suits, because they are not your friends who urge those things upon you, but have private ends of their own, which are not fit for you. So praying God to bless you,

"I rest, your very loving father,

"G. CANT." ⁸⁴

The conduct of Villiers on a subsequent occasion made a deep impression on the mind of the excellent prelate who thus befriended the youth. "The Roman historian, Tacitus," he bitterly remarks, "hath somewhere a note, that benefits while they may be requited, seem courtesies, but

⁸⁴ Extract from a letter quoted in Bishop Goodman's Life, vol ii., p. 160. This epistle is endorsed "To my very loving son, Sir George Villiers, Knight," and dated Lambeth, December 10th, 1615.

when they are so high that they cannot be repaid, they prove matters of hatred.”⁸⁵ This was a severe reflection on one who ought never to have forgotten the greatest of all obligations, those bestowed on the unfriended by one in the height of favour. Villiers may henceforth be regarded as fairly launched in his career; it was perhaps his misfortune that so few important obstacles occurred in his progress, and that it was achieved by an apparent concurrence of lucky events, and not by patient merit, nor by any of the legitimate sources of success. “The genius of the man,” observes a modern writer, “was daring and magnificent, and his elocution was graceful as his manners; but these were natural talents; he possessed no acquired ones.”⁸⁶

A true, free-spoken, conscientious friend might have guarded his youth from peril, and given to his aspiring mind a laudable bias. Abbot would have been that friend, but Abbot was soon discarded, and an incident occurred some years afterwards which clouded this excellent prelate’s days, and produced a temporary, though unmerited, disgrace.

The archbishop, like many churchmen of his

⁸⁵ Rushworth’s Collections, vol. i., p. 460.

⁸⁶ See the Character of Buckingham, Disraeli’s Charles I., ii., p. 167.

time, was an ardent lover of the chace. In this respect he resembled Cranmer, who was so great a horseman as to be called the "rough rider," since no steed came amiss to his fearless and practised guidance.

Abbot was hunting, in the summer of 1621, in Lord Zouch's park of Bramsell, in Hampshire. He aimed at a deer, which, leaping up, evaded the shot, but a gamekeeper who had hidden himself behind the herd, was killed by the discharge from the lively primate's gun. An inquest was held, and a verdict of death by "misfortune and the keeper's own fault" was returned. It appeared that the man had been that very morning warned not to go in that direction. King James, on first hearing of this occurrence, declared that none "but a fool or knave would think the worse of Abbot for that accident, the like of which had once nearly happened to himself."

Abbot, it seemed, had gone into Hampshire with the intention of consecrating a chapel as Lord Zouch's, and not merely for the purposes of amusement.⁸⁷ On considering the matter, nevertheless, his legal advisers did not consider the verdict to have been legally drawn up. Abbot therefore wrote to Lord Zouch, requesting him to have the coroner and jury re-summoned, and the verdict re-considered.

⁸⁷ State Papers, Domestic, cxxii., No. 28.

dered, the credit of his profession being involved, and his enemies ready to slander him.⁸⁸ In a subsequent letter he recalled this request, declaring that it was unnecessary; that he had a clear conscience, and was anxious to do everything to give his enemies no advantages over him. In a few days, nevertheless, he went again to Lord Zouch, declaring that his unhappy accident had been a bitter potion to him, on account of the conflict with his conscience, complaining that he was the talk of men, the cause of rejoicing to the Papist and insult to the Puritan.⁸⁹ The King was still gracious to him, but the primate remained in seclusion, and misfortune seemed at hand.⁹⁰ These letters were written in August. In the October of the same year, the King appointed an inquiry into the accidental killing of the keeper in Bramsell Park, and desired three bishops and others to examine whether there had been scandal brought upon the Church or not.⁹¹ The commissioners were divided, strange to say, upon the question of the archbishop's guilt or innocence, but their decision, influenced by the strong advocacy of the Bishop of Winchester, was ultimately in his

⁸⁸ State Papers, *Ibid*, No. 61.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, No. 97, vol. ii., 112.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, vol. cxxiii.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, cxxiii. No. 1000.

favour. The King, as the head of the Church, then absolved him, but all the new bishops were so unwilling to receive consecration at his hand, that Abbot was obliged to appoint three prelates to consecrate for him. All forfeitures and penalties for this offence were remitted, and the archbishop restored to the King's presence. There is, however, no proof of what one looks for with solicitude, the mediation of Buckingham in favour of his friend and patron, although there is no reason, from the result, to suppose that it may not have been exerted.

This attempt to make the archbishop's mishap a "culpable homicide," originated in the Lord Keeper Williams, who had formed a plot for *depriving* Abbot. The accusation was based upon the ground that the primate had been employed in an unlawful act when the accident occurred, but Coke decreed that "by the laws of the realm, a bishop may lawfully hunt in a park; hunt he may, because a bishop, when dying, is to leave his pack of hounds to the King's free will and disposal."⁹²

Such were the incidents which deprived Villiers, for a time, of the valuable counsels of Abbot. It must, however, be also remembered, when the real ignorance of Villiers is considered, and

⁹² Lord Campbell's Life of Coke, p. 314.

when his deficiencies and his errors are lamented as constituting in his case a national misfortune, that in his career as a courtier he wanted the needful element in all improvement, leisure. The daily existence of James was made up of toilsome pleasures,—the chase, the drama, the mask,—at which Villiers, weary, doubtless, at times, of the incessant pageant, sometimes assisted. He soon imbibed a still greater taste for display than even his crafty mother had implanted in him for ambitious purposes, and became, like most persons suddenly raised from poverty and obscurity, inordinately ostentatious and prodigal.

It is amusing, however, to find him, in the early days of his greatness, learning horsemanship. James was passionately fond of seeing others exhibit on horseback. One of his favourite places of resort was Newmarket. The King generally joined in all country amusements, drawn in a litter, a mortal inward disease even then making that gentle movement necessary; whilst the young and noble thronged around him on their steeds, set off in all the bravery of costly caparisons. Prince Henry had, during his brief career, set the fashion of a fondness for horse-racing, and James, who suffered so many of his accomplished son's higher objects to become extinct in his grave,

maintained in all its prosperity that diversion. Newmarket, henceforth, was a favourite place of resort. Amongst the late Prince's equerries was a Frenchman named St. Antoine, whose feats are frequently the subject of comment in the newsletters of the day.

It was in the depth of the winter when James, attended by twenty earls and barons, repaired to Newmarket. There was little accommodation for them in that place, and the gay company were obliged to bestow themselves in the poor villages around. Every morning, whilst at this resort, Villiers was mounted on horseback, and taught to ride;⁹³ and his progress in the King's favour seemed to be commensurate with his prowess. This was in the December of the year 1615. On the fourth of January, 1615-16, Villiers was appointed Master of the Horse, instead of the Earl of Worcester, who resigned all his posts into the King's hands, and was made Lord Privy Seal.⁹⁴

This mark of royal preference gave a fresh impetus to the decline of Somerset's fortunes. In a masque written by Ben Johnson, and per-

⁹³ Probably by Mons. St. Antoine, the equerry to M. Henry. He was engaged as a riding-master, as we find by Endymour Porter's letters, (State Paper Office, Domestic) to many persons of condition.

⁹⁴ Nichols's Progresses, 7, 1, III., 131.

formed at court, a bold allusion was made to the sinking prosperity of the Earl, and a hint thrown out of his suspected crime. The play was entitled, "The Golden Age Restored," and these lines excited considerable attention and speculation—

"Jove can endure no longer
Your great ones should your less invade :
Or that your weak, *though bad*, be made,
A prey unto the stronger."

The "weak" was conjectured to be Overbury, and the delicacy of the allusion has been pronounced by a modern critic⁹⁵ "to be above all praise." The masque was followed by a banquet, at which the new Master of the Horse doubtless assisted, attired in all the splendours which his now adequate means enabled him to assume.

Those who viewed, merely as spectators, these various incidents, were curious to know on what terms Somerset and his young rival stood together. It was impossible, they knew, for James, always involved, as he was, in the labyrinths of some crooked policy, not to temporise with one whose influence over him was fast waning away, not to unite, if possible, amity to Somerset with partiality to Villiers. Accordingly, whilst honours were thus showered upon the new favourite, "like

⁹⁵ Gifford. Ben Jonson's Works.

main showers, then sprinkling drops on dews,"⁹⁶ it was still thought necessary to conciliate Somerset, and to make it appear, at all events to the public, that Villiers owed his elevation to the goodwill of that offended and resentful nobleman.

It was deemed, therefore, expedient to take the very first opportunity that could be available for propitiating Somerset, and, accordingly, after the completion of the ceremonial of knighting, Sir Humphrey May was despatched to inform Somerset that "Sir George Villiers, newly knighted, would desire his protection." Half an hour afterwards, Sir George visited the Lord Chamberlain, and paid him this compliment:—

"My lord, I desire to be your servant and creature, and to take my court preferment under your favour, assuring your lordship that you shall find me as faithful a servant as ever did serve you."

He spoke, however, to the inflamed mind of a jealous foe. The Earl is said to have turned fiercely upon him, and answered impetuously in these words:—⁹⁷

"I will have none of your service, and you shall have none of my favour. I will, if I can, break your neck, and of that be con-

⁹⁶ Reliquiæ Wottonianæ, p. 210.

⁹⁷ Birch's MS., British Museum, 4176

fident.” This rash conduct is declared to have hastened the fall of Somerset, by proving to the friends of Villiers that one of the two rivals in the royal favour must retire, and that Somerset would brook no equal in the court.

But there were other circumstances palpably concurring to close the shameless career of Somerset, and abundantly accounting for his fall, without attributing much importance to the adventitious appearance of George Villiers at Court. The discovery of his guilt by Secretary Winwood⁹⁸ was preceded by such a long course of public and private profligacy, that it is no wonder that Somerset should see, in the prosperity of a young man whose reputation was unstained by a single crime, an earnest of his own downfall, and that he should employ the greater precaution to avert the coming storm. His efforts were, how-

⁹⁸ Of the mode of this discovery, differing accounts are given. According to Carte, Winwood derived the information of Somerset's guilt, from Archbishop Abbot, who detected it in some papers found in a trunk, which was brought to the Archbishop by a servant of Overbury's. See Carte's *Hist. Eng.* vol. ii. p. 43. Sir Symonds D'Ewes declares that the foul deed was disclosed by Sir Thomas Elwis, Lieutenant of the Tower, to Secretary Winwood, acknowledging and excusing his own connivance in the affair, and laying the instigation of it to the account of Somerset and his wretched wife.—D'Ewe's *MS. Journal in Bishop Goodman's Life*, vol. iv., p. 144.

ever, unavailing. His sending away the apothecary who administered the poison to Overbury to France; his disgracing all who spoke of the death of that unfortunate man, hoping by such arbitrary acts to smother the remembrance of that crime; his tyrannical investigation, by his warrant as a privy counsellor, of all trunks, chests, and libraries in which he suspected that any letters relative to that dark business might be concealed; all were proofs confirmatory of that dark and foul plot the recollection of which permitted to the terror-stricken Somerset not one moment of comfort. He now began to act as a friendless and desperate man, who, feeling that the ground is slipping from beneath his feet, tries to hoard up wealth as a resource. He undertook no intercession with the King without large bribes; and every new occurrence brought him what is termed by the authors of the tract entitled "The First Fourteen Years of King James's Reign," a fleece of money.⁹⁹ Offices about the Court were all for the highest bidder, and even the King's letters were bought and sold; no plunder was obtained without purchase, so that Somerset was soon known to be as notorious a bribe-taker as his mother-in-law, the Countess of

⁹⁹ Published in Somers's Tracts, vol. ii.

Suffolk. The high-born and the highly-principled saw with disgust, now ill-concealed, the minion leaning on the King's cushion even in public, and treating their haughty and influential class with rash scorn, disdaining even that respect which was imperatively due to the Primate, Abbo, whose popularity was at that time in its zenith. Many suspected that beneath this arrogant bearing, stimulating an impolitic cupidity of gain, there lurked secret fears and a stricken heart, a horror of the past and a dread of the future; and conjectured, as well they might, that Somerset was never more to know repose of mind—nor, perhaps, long to enjoy personal security.¹

By all these circumstances Villiers wisely profited during his early days of favour; and happy had it been for him had he never forgotten the lesson thus afforded him in the awful tragedy of Somerset's career; more awful, perhaps, than if the secret sins of the wretched Earl had been visited with a signal retribution from the hand of power. There is something in this miscreant's forlorn and protracted existence, after all that in life is

¹Somerset was even accused of having poisoned Prince Henry; but Coppinger, a former servant of his, who accused him of that crime, was said to be "cracked in his wits." State Papers, vol. cxxxvii., p. 27.

valuable—honour, peace of mind, influence—were gone, that is more desolate and appalling to the fancy than if the Tower had for ever enclosed him, or the executioner claimed his life as a penalty for his sins. The unpunished murderer walking abroad, shunned by all, is a sort of moral leper; desolate in his freedom, and chastised even by the silence and avoidance of his fellow men.

That Villiers took any active part in the measures which ensued, his bitterest foes have not ventured to allege. Young, devoted to pleasure, indifferent, at this time, to gain, ambitious, but not grasping, he enjoyed at this period that general esteem, the absence of which he bitterly felt in after life. Those who hated Somerset turned to Villiers, and found him full of courtesy and of generous impulses. Those who were on the point of offering bribes to Somerset discovering that Villiers had the ear of the King, applied to him, and obtained gratuitously what they sought. The country, as well as the Court, was ringing with complaints of the Lord Chamberlain's extortions, when the accidental illness and remorse of an apothecary's boy decided his fate. That individual, employed by his master to administer the dose to Overbury, fell ill at Flushing, and the whole mystery, with all its concomitants, was

revealed. "A small breach thus being made, Somerset's enemies, like the rush of many waters, rise up against him, following the stream." Thus does Arthur Wilson well express the ruin of one who, for two years, had succeeded in defying curiosity and keeping the secret of his crime unrevealed.

With the inconsistent conduct of the King during the proceedings against his rival, Villiers appears to have had no concern, except such as his situation of private secretary to King James, an office which appears to have devolved upon him upon the disgrace of Somerset, necessarily entailed. The alienation of James's regard from Somerset, and the rising influence of Villiers, are nevertheless, according to a high authority, "very necessary to be borne in mind" through the legal proceedings against the fallen favourite.² That Villiers desired the entire exclusion of Somerset from royal favour is more than probable; that he took any undue or direct means to ensure it is doubtful, unless we take as evidence of an under-current of intrigue, the secret negotiations which went on between him and Sir Francis Bacon, to whom the conduct of the prosecution was consigned before the 15th of February, 1615. Whilst

² Amos's *Great Oyer of Poisoning*, vol i., pp. 31 and 33.

Somerset was awaiting his trial, Bacon addressed to Villiers the following letter. It is commonly remarked that a postscript is the most important portion of a letter; but, in this case, the endorsement gives the greatest insight into the motives of the writer. On the back of the epistle are these words: "A letter to Sir G. Villiers, touching a message brought to me by Mr. Shute, of a promise of the chancellor's place." To this the following letter is the reply:—

"In the message I received from you by Mr. Shute, hath bred in me such belief and confidence, as I will now wholly rely on your excellent and happy self. When persons of greatness and quality begin speech with me of the matter, and offer me their good offices, I can but answer them civilly. But these things are but toys. I am yours, surer to you than my own life. For, as they speak of a torquoise-stone in a ring, I will break into twenty pieces before you fall. God keep you for ever.

"Your truest servant,

"FRANCIS BACON."

"P. S.—My Lord Chancellor is prettily amended. I was with him yesterday for half an hour; we both wept, which I do not do very often."³

³ Bacon's Works, vol. ii., p. 183.

That the fortunes of Villiers were ensured by the awful disclosures of guilt which ensued, there can be no doubt. It is worthy of remark, how vitiated must have been the state of that society, the highest in rank, the foremost in fashion, in which crimes so fearful, compassed and aided by associates of the lowest and most infamous description, could be ascribed to individuals, and yet those individuals continue to hold their position in society. It is true that, during that interval which must have been to the guilty Earl and Countess of Somerset a season of incessant fear and anguish, reports had been "buzzing about Somerset's ears, like a rising storm upon a well-spread oak;" but he had considered himself to be too firmly planted in the King's regard ever to be up-rooted. And perhaps, had Villiers not come forward opportunely to redeem the national credit, and to save a remnant of the King's character from utter reprobation and contempt, England might have been still enslaved, until the close of James's reign, by the extortionate Earl and his haughty and murderous Countess.

Meantime, Villiers continued to profit by the delinquencies of his rival. He profited in the way most gratifying to an honourable mind.

way most gratifying to an honourable mind. No intrigues to supplant, no efforts to hasten the ruin of the Earl, are recorded to his discredit. He set, at this period of his career, a bright, though unhappily a transient, example of what a royal favorite might prove. He repudiated, not only the avarice, but the over-bearing of Somerset.

He was courteous and affable to all, and seemed to "court men as they courted him." Free from all assumption, he still delighted to associate with the gentlemen in waiting, and to join in their amusements, which consisted, after supper, in leaping and exercises, in which none was so active as the young favorite.⁴ He thus preserved in health and agility that noble form which excited the admiration of his country. Such was his popularity, even with the old and haughty nobility, that they were proud if they might aid in decking the "handsomest bodied man of England."⁵ His taste for

⁴ I have passed over the dreadful story of Overbury's murder, and its concomitant circumstances, because Villiers had no participation in public affairs until shortly before the arraignment of the two culprits. A letter written by Lord Bacon immediately previous to that event is evidently in reply to one addressed to his Lordship by Villiers, by order of the King. This fixes the date of his acting as private secretary to James. See Lord Bacon's Works, vol. ii., p. 173.

⁵ Carte.

gorgeous apparel now displaying itself, he was complimented by the nobles of James's Court in the following manner:—one of them would send to “his tailor and his mercer to put good clothes upon the newly-made knight; another to his sempstress for curious linen; others took upon them to be his bravos, and all hands helped to piece up the new minion.”⁶ So winning was the deportment of Villiers, that even his enemies were propitiated to acknowledge “that he was as inwardly beautiful, as he was outwardly, and that the world had not a more ingenious gentleman.”⁷ He incurred, however, some risk in his ardour for amusement; and on one occasion over-strained himself in running, which greatly distressed the King.⁸ So rapid was the rise of Villiers, that Lord Clarendon describes it by the term “germination.” “Surely had he been a plant,” says that great historian, “he would have been reckoned among the stoute nascentes, for he sprang without any help, by a sort of ingenious composure (as we may term it) to the likeness of our late sovereign and master, of blessed memory, who, taking him into his regard,

⁶ Bishop Goodman's Life, vol. i., p. 225.

⁷ Carte, vol. ii., p. 43, from Weldon's Court and Character of King James I.

⁸ Bishop Goodman's Life, vol. i., p. 226.

taught him more and more to please himself, and moulded him, as it were, platonically, to his own idea, delighting first in the choice of his materials, because he found him susceptible of good form, and afterwards by degrees, as great architects used to do, in the workmanship of his regal hand.”⁹ This flattering tribute to King James might have been spared, for the monarch, whose blind and almost wicked partiality emboldened, and perhaps corrupted, Somerset, can hardly be conceived to have formed the character of Villiers.

The testimony of Lord Clarendon that Villiers, like his supposed prototype, the Earl of Essex, was a “fair-spoken gentleman,” not prone and eager to detract openly from any man, “is a greater eulogy,” and to this, the noble historian adds another, which, he affirms, “the malignant eye could not refuse to Villiers;” “that certainly never man in his place or power did entertain *greatness more familiarly*,” an expression singularly felicitous, as conveying a sense of that innate greatness which exalts its possessor above conventional distinctions. His looks were “untainted by his felicity.” No conscious im-

⁹ Parallel between the Duke of Buckingham and the Earl of Essex. *Reliquiæ Wottonianæ*, p. 163.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

portance, no haughty contempt, none of the littleness of pride, disgusted his equals or depressed his inferiors. "This, in my judgment," remarks Clarendon, "was one of his greatest virtues and victories of himself."

The elevation of Villiers appears, however, not to have been so spontaneous as Lord Clarendon supposes. "Once commenced, it ran," says Sir Henry Wotton, "as smoothly as numerous verses, till it met with certain rubs in Parliament."

Thus, to borrow still from the same author, "the course of royal favour being uninterrupted, the Duke's thoughts were free."¹¹

Meanwhile, the most fearful disclosures were shocking the public ear, and rendering more secure than ever the prosperity of Villiers.

In the month of March, 1616, Lady Somerset was committed to the Tower. So promptly were the measures now resolved upon executed, that she had "scant leisure," as a contemporary relates, "to shed a few tears over her little daughter at the parting."¹² This was the single touch of natural affection which is latent in every heart, and

¹¹ *Reliquiæ Wottonianæ*, p. 166.

¹² Letter from Mr. Chamberlain to Sir O. Carleton; March 6, 1616. State Papers. Also given in the "Grand Oyer of Poisoning," by Andrew Amos, Esq.

was not wholly extinguished even in the heart of the unhappy woman. Having given way to that burst of emotion, she bore herself, as the same report states, "constantly enough," until she was carried into the enclosure of the Tower. Then, affrighted and conscience-stricken, she did, according to the same account, "passionately deprecate, and entreat the Lieutenant, that she might not be lodged in Sir Thomas Overbury's lodging, so that he was fain to remove himself out of his own chamber for two or three nights, till Sir Walter Raleigh's lodging might be furnished and made fit for her."

To this gloomy apartment, the wretched countess was consigned; her trial was fixed for the fifteenth of May. But when that day drew near, when the stage in the middle of Westminster Hall was completed, the scaffolding around it finished, and when seats had been purchased at the rate of four or five pieces each—that being an ordinary price—and when even a lawyer and his wife, as Mr. Chamberlain, the writer of the letter from whom these details are collected, states, agreed to give two pounds for himself and his wife for ten days, and fifty pounds was given for a corner that "would scarcely contain a dozen," the eager public was disappointed. The trial was

put off till the twenty-second of the same month.¹³

Lady Somerset's sudden illness was assigned as the cause of this delay. Upon warning being given her that her trial was to come on on Wednesday, "she fell to casting and scouring, and so continued the next day very sick," her illness being ascribed partly to trepidation, partly to the suspicion of her having taken poison. But she recovered to make, as the same eye-witness remarks, shorter work of it, by confessing the indictment; and "to win pity by her sober demeanour," "more curious and confident than was fit for a lady in such distress; and yet she shed, or made shew of, some tears divers times." Contrary to the usual practice in criminal trials, no invectives were urged against her, it being the King's pleasure that no "odious nor uncivil speeches" should be given. The general opinion was, that in spite of her manifest guilt, this miserable culprit would not suffer the penalty of the law. It must have been a singular sight to have beheld the Earl of Essex, her former husband, a spectator among the titled crowd at the arraignment; the first day, privately—the second "full in Somerset's face."

¹³ See State Paper Office. Domestic, 1616. This letter is printed in Nichols's Progresses.

Lady Somerset was sentenced "to be hanged by the neck till she was stark dead." When the fatal cap was assumed, and the decree uttered, she bore herself with more calmness than her husband; who, upon sentence of death being passed upon him, was so appalled that, when asked what he should say to avert that decree, he would "stand still upon his own innocence," and could hardly be brought to refer himself to the King's mercy. He was afterwards induced to rest upon that point; to write to the King, entreating that the judgment of "hanging should be changed to that of heading;" "and that his daughter might have such lands as the King did not resume."¹⁴

Villiers, no doubt, witnessed this memorable trial, and beheld the utter degradation of his rival. The contrast which his own brilliant fortunes presented to the disgrace and ruin of others, is shewn by the rapid succession of honours which were conferred upon him.

The spectacle, which must have harrowed a mind not corrupted by the ambition of a court, was diversified by a grand ceremonial, and a new honour. This was the election of Villiers into the order of the Garter, which took place on the 24th of

¹⁴ Ibid; printed in Nichols's Progresses, vol. iii., p. 169.

April, on St. George's day, whilst Somerset and his wife lay trembling in the Tower.

Francis, Earl of Rutland, was admitted to a similar honour on the same day. The world cavilled at this nobleman's good fortune; for his wife was an open and known recusant, and the Earl himself was thought to have many disaffected persons about him. It was soon, however, discovered that there was a design to improve the fortunes of Villiers by marrying him to the young heiress of the house of Rutland. Meantime, to enable his favourite to maintain the honours thus lavished upon him, and more especially to support the dignities required by the express articles of the Order in which he was installed, James bestowed upon Villiers "lands and means;" and it was reported that estates, then belonging to the Earl of Somerset, were to be added to those gifts, should that delinquent "sink under his present trial."¹⁵

Hitherto, Sir George Villiers appears to have figured alone amid the gay and envying crowds of Whitehall, or among the equestrians at Newmarket. But one of the greater proofs of his extending influence was the favour shewn at this time to his mother.

The condition of Lady Villiers was wholly

¹⁵ *Biographia Britannica*, Art. Villiers.

changed since her son had left her a widow in the seclusion of Goadby. Having allied herself, by a second marriage, to a rich and potent family—the Comptons—she had shared in their prosperity. Compton had married Elizabeth, the daughter of Sir John Spencer, Mayor of London, who had died some years previously,¹⁶ first leaving a fortune of three hundred thousand pounds, according to some authors; to others, of eight hundred thousand pounds. The bequest of this money to his wife completely upset Lord Compton's reason; and it seems to have benefited his family more than himself.¹⁷ For though he appears to have recovered his intellect, he did not live long to enjoy his great wealth, which went to enrich his brother.

Lady Villiers, or as she was henceforth called, Lady Villiers Compton, was now admitted into the circles of the exclusive and lordly inmates of one of the King's favourite resorts, Hatfield, and in June, 1616, she met His Majesty there.

Some awkwardness attended this visit to the Earl and Countess of Salisbury. The Countess of Suffolk, the mother of Lady Somerset, was there;

¹⁶ The celebrated letter written by Lady Compton on this occasion, is inserted in the *Life of Bishop Goodman*, vol. ii., p. 127, and affords a fair specimen of the expectations of ladies of rank and fortune in those days.

and fears might be entertained in what manner King James would meet the mother of so great a culprit; but the imperturbable insensibility of the monarch, or perhaps his lingering regard for Somerset, obviated all difficulties. He kissed the Countess of Suffolk twice; and performed the office of sponsor conjointly with her husband, with whom, relates an eye witness, "the King is grown as great and as far in grace as ever he was, which sudden invitations, without any intermedience, made the Spanish Ambassador cry out, '*Volo a dios que la Corte d'Inglaterra es com uno libró di Cavaleros andantes.*'" Upon this stately occasion, the Countess of Suffolk "kept a table alone, save that the Lady Villiers Compton only was admitted, and all the entertainment was chiefly intended and directed to her and her children and followers." Nor was it only empty civility that marked the royal favour: shortly afterwards the elder brother of George Villiers, John, was knighted at Oatlands, in Surrey, that ceremonial being a prelude to the titles of Baron Villiers of Stoke and Viscount Purbeck, which were conferred upon him three years afterwards. On the sixth of July, the instalment of the new Knights of the Garter, the Earl of Rutland and Sir George Villiers,

and of Robert Sydney, Viscount Lisle, took place; the ceremonial was performed on a Sunday, and on the same afternoon, a chapter was held to consider the point whether the Earl of Somerset's arms were to be taken away or left as they were. So closely did the elevation of Villiers follow on the downfall of his rival.¹⁷

Somerset, however, still displayed, even in his prison in the Tower, his Garter and his George; whilst the public were scandalized by repeated messages carried by Lord Hay, between the King and the condemned Earl; and the result of these was soon perceived. Somerset had the liberty of the Tower granted to him; he was seen walking about, and talking to the Earl of Northumberland, who was still in prison on account of the Gunpowder Plot; and at other times saluting his lady at the window. "It is much spoken of," writes Mr. Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton, "how Princes of that Order, to let our own pass, can digest to be coupled with a man civilly dead, and corrupt in blood,

¹⁷ Nichols, iii., p. 175. His arms were, after a long dispute, removed higher, in the same manner as when new arms and banners were introduced. According to Camden, "the King ordered that felony should not be reckoned amongst the disgraces of those who were to be excluded from the Order of St. George, "*which was without precedent.*" Nichols, iii., p. 177.

and so no gentleman, should continue a Knight of the Garter." Lady Somerset's pardon had been signed the foregoing week, and, as matters now stood, Villiers might still tremble lest his advancement should be delayed, and the noble miscreants be restored to favours.

His success, nevertheless, continued, for Anne of Denmark was in the interests of the young favourite. During the month of August the Queen addressed a letter to Villiers, who was then attending on the King, couched in these familiar terms:—

"MY KIND DOG,

"Your letter hath been acceptable to me. I rest allreadie assured of your carefulnessse. You may tell your maister that the King of Dennemark hath sent me twelf faire mares, and, as the drivers of them assures, all great with foles, which I intend to put into Byefield¹⁸ Parke, where being the other day a-hunting, I could finde but vere few deare, but great store of other cattle, as I shall tell your maister myself when I see him. I hope to meet you all at Woodstock at the time appointed, till when I wish you all happiness and contentment,

"ANNA R.

¹⁸ Byfleet, in Surrey.

“I thank you for your paines taken in remembering the King for the pailing of me parke. I will doe you any service I can.”

This characteristic letter was the prelude to the elevation of Villiers to the peerage. At first, it was determined that he should be created Viscount Beaumont, in compliment to his mother's family; and the coronet and robes were sent down to Woodstock; but that decision was changed for an obvious reason, and the title of Baron Whaddon was conferred upon Villiers, Whaddon being the estate of the unfortunate Lord Grey, who had expired in the Tower in 1614, being implicated in the supposed attempt to place Arabella Stuart on the throne.

On the twenty-seventh of August, 1616, the ceremony of this double creation took place.

On this occasion, the preface to the patent was composed by Lord Bacon, who, on sending it to the King, observed that he had not used in it “glaring terms,” but drawn it according to His Majesty's instructions. It was determined that the two creations, those of Baron Whaddon and Viscount Villiers, should take place at the same time, the former being intended to secure the estates of Whaddon, the latter, to preserve the name of Villiers in the

appellation of the favourite. This appears to have been the especial will of James. "For the name," writes Bacon to Villiers, on sending him his patent for the title of Viscount, "His Majesty's will is law in these things; and to speak truth, it is a well-sounding name both here and abroad, and being even a proper name, I will take it for a good sign that you shall give honour to your dignity, and not your dignity to you. Therefore, I have made it 'Viscount Villiers;' and as for your Barony, I will keep it for an Earldom, for though the latter had been more orderly, yet that is as usual, and both alike good in law."

The patent, however, was again altered. It is possible that Bacon may have imagined that the associations connected with Whaddon, and relating to a nobleman generally compassionate,¹⁹ might have rendered Villiers unpopular: at all events he changed it to Blechly; and Villiers received the patent of Lord Blechly, of Blechly.²⁰

"I have sent you," Bacon thus wrote, "now,

¹⁹ According to Carte, Villiers was obliged to pay 11,000*l.* to Sir Rowland Egerton, who had married Lord Grey's sister, and also to procure Sir Rowland the patent of Baronetcy. But this is discredited by Sir Egerton Brydges. See *Men of Fame*, vol. i., p. 79.

²⁰ Bacon's letters, vol. ii., p. 35.

your patent of creation of Lord Blechly of Blechly, and of Viscount Villiers. Blechly is your own, and I like the sound of the name better than Whaddon; but the name will be laid aside, for you wish to be called Viscount Villiers. I have put them both in a patent, after the manner of the patent of arms where baronies are joined; but the chief reason was, because I would avoid double prefaces, which had not been fit; nevertheless, the ceremony of robing, and otherwise, must be double.”²¹

Sir George Villiers was introduced to the royal presence, on this occasion, by his relative, Lord Compton, and by Lord Norris, the Lord Carew carrying the robe of state before him, when his new honour of Baron Blechly of Blechly was conferred. He was afterwards created Viscount Villiers, when he appeared in a surcoat of scarlet velvet, and was brought in by the Earl of Suffolk and Viscount Lisle, Lord Norris carrying the robe of state of the same coloured velvet, and Lord Compton the crown. The King was seated on his throne, and the Queen, and Charles, Prince of Wales, were present, and all the company “seemed jolly, and well afraid.”

The advice which Bacon proffered to Villiers, upon his elevation to the peerage, is couched

²¹ Bacon's Letters.

in noble terms, and wants nothing but the indefinable charm of supposed sincerity to perfect it:—

“And after that the King shall have watered your new dignities with his bounty of the lands which he intends you, and that some other things concerning your means, which are now likewise in intention, shall be settled upon you, I do not see but you may think your private fortunes established; and, therefore, it is now time that you should refer your actions chiefly to the good of your sovereign and your country. It is the life of an ox or a beast, always to eat and never to exercise; but men are born, especially Christian men, not to cram in their fortunes, but to exercise their virtues; and yet the others have been the unworthy, and sometimes the humour of great persons in our time; neither will your further fortune be the farther off; for assure yourself that fortune is of a woman’s nature, that will sooner follow you by slighting than by too much moving.”²²

He recommends the young peer, in this “dedication of himself to the public, to countenance, encourage, and advance able and virtuous men, in all degrees, kinds, and professions.” And in places of moment, “rather,” he says, “make

²² Bacon’s Letters, vol. ii., p. 85.

able and honest men yours, than advance those that are otherwise because they are yours."

"The time is," he adds, in conclusion, "that you think goodness the best part of greatness: and that you remember whence your rising comes, and make return accordingly, God ever keep you."

Some time afterwards, another characteristic epistle from the Queen denoted the secret terms upon which Anne of Denmark stood with the young favourite:—

"MY KIND DOG,

"I have received your letter, which is verie welcom to me; you doe verie well in lugging the sowes (the King's) ears, and I thank you for it, and whould have you do so still, upon condition that you continue a watchful dog to him, and be alwayes true to him. So wishing you all happines.

"ANNA R." ²³

It is not a matter of surprise that, thus caressed by both the King and Queen, marks of favour should have followed in continual succession. According to Lord Clarendon, the rapid rise of Villiers might be imputed to a certain innate "wisdom and virtue that was in him, with which he surprised,

²³ Nichols, vol. iii., p. 187.

and even fascinated, all the faculties of his incomparable master."

And this was no matter of surprise, if we may believe in the truth of the following remarks:—"That Villiers was no sooner admitted to stand there in his own right, but the eyes of all such as look'd out of judgement, or gazed out of curiosity, were quickly directed towards him; as a man, in the delicacy and beauty of his colour, decency and grace of his motion, the most rarely accomplished they had ever beheld."

The emotions experienced by Villiers, as he gradually ascended higher and higher towards the eminence of worldly grandeur, are well described by Lord Clarendon, in the following words:—

"His swiftness and nimbleness in rising, may be with less injury ascribed to a vivacity than any ambition in his nature; since, it is certain the King's eagerness to advance him, so surprised his youth, that he seemed only to be held up by the violent inclinations of the King, than to climb up by any art or industry of his own."²⁴ It is not to be marvelled at, that the character of Villiers should suffer in this ordeal, fiercer than that of the most depressing vicissitude and adversity; and soon, therefore, indications are to be found, in the annals of the day, of a dawning

²⁴ Disparity, p. 194.

selfishness and imperiousness, foreign to the simple and courteous nature of Villiers.²⁵ Still there were noble traits of a lingering greatness of spirit, which justify the partiality which every one who analyses his character must necessarily entertain for it; sometimes at variance with his better judgment. Whilst by watchful bystanders it was remarked that Villiers, the new made Viscount, "will hardly suffer any one to leap over his head," nor would he allow the Lord Chancellor Ellesmere to be made an Earl; by others, a sacrifice of interest, proceeding from a generous scruple, is recorded.

It will be remembered by historical readers, that Sherborne Castle, the forfeited estate of Sir Walter Raleigh, had been bestowed by James upon the Earl of Somerset. When supplicated by Lady Raleigh to restore that property to her children, the monarch's answer was, "I mean to have it for Carr;" a reply, which, as Mr. Amos justly observes, "cannot be read in the present day without indignation;" "what impressions," he adds, "must it have produced on the contemporaries of Raleigh and Carr?"²⁶ At the trial of Somerset, this luckless possession, upon which a curse has been supposed to rest, was highly prejudicial to him; and many there were, who

²⁵ Nichols, vol. iii., p. 191.

²⁶ Great Oyer of Poisoning, p. 29, by Andrew Amos, Esq.

regarded his calamities as a judgment for this detested acquisition.

When the Earl of Somerset's lands were given away, after his forfeiture, the estate of Sherborne was offered to Villiers; he might, perhaps, have accepted it without odium, for upon Prince Charles had been bestowed all Somerset's estates in the north. But he refused the offer of Sherborne, according to a passage in Birch's MSS., "in a most noble fashion; praying the King that the building of his fortunes might not be founded on the ruin of another."²⁷ Sherborne, the value of which was at this time about eight hundred pounds yearly, but was expected to be shortly double that sum, was given to Sir John Digby, upon the payment of ten thousand pounds, and has remained ever since in the same family. The respect of Villiers towards the memory of an unfortunate man was much appreciated; already had public opinion visited with its bitterest curse, the traitor, Sir Lewis Stukeley, who was afterwards

²⁷ Birch's MSS. 4176. This anecdote, so creditable to Buckingham, is confirmed by a grant in the State Paper Office. S. P. O. vol. cv., No. 20, see Calendar, 1616-17, March 12, the grant to the Earl of Buckingham, fee-simple of the manors of Beaumont, Oldhall and Newhall de Beaumont, Mose, Okeley Magna, Okeley Parva, Sligghawe, Okeley Park, Mose Park, Essex, together with all timbers and advowsons belonging to them, which the Lord Darcie of Chiche

a prisoner in that very "chamber in the Tower, in which Raleigh, whom he had betrayed, had spent twelve years of misery."²⁸

Sir Henry Wotton compares the repetition of benefits conferred upon Villiers, to a kind of embroidering, or listing of one favour upon another. But all these preferments were, he adds, but the "faceings or fringeings of his greatness," compared with that trust which the King shortly reposed in his favourite, when he made him "the chief concomitant of his heir apparent."²⁹

This important mark of respect and confidence had never been extended to the ill-fated predecessor in James's favour, the Earl of Somerset. If Villiers were at that period of his life unworthy of the trust, James, endowed as he was with all the experience which his own vicious Court could bestow, was criminal beyond measure to place his only son, on whom the hopes of the nation rested, in contaminated society. James must, in that case, have been either grossly deceived, or immeasurably culpable. The friendship, thus commenced between the prince and the favourite, in holdeth for terme of his life. Manor of Fleete, marshes of Trewdales, Fleetehouse Hall Hills, in Lincolne, in lieu of the manor of Teynton Magna, Gloucester, *part of value for Sherborne*, escheated to the Crown by Somerset's attainder. Inedited MSS. Domestic, 1616-17.

²⁸ Hutchins's History of Dorsetshire, vol. iv., p. 83.

²⁹ Reliquiæ Wottonianæ.

youth, was fraught with consequences so important to this country, that few points of historical biography can offer greater domestic interest than the early intimacy between Charles and Villiers.

Charles, Prince of Wales, was eight years younger than the man whom he afterwards admitted to an intimacy such as has been rarely permitted between a monarch and a subject, and which ceased only when Villiers expired. The superstitious, when they remembered, in aftertimes, the perils of the young prince's infancy, saw in them a type of his fate. "He was born," says the historian Kennet, "and baptized, in somewhat of surprise and confusion, as it were beginning the world in a sort of presage how he was to end it."³⁰ So feeble was he, that even afterwards, although in process of time there were many great ladies suitors for the keeping of the infant Prince, yet when they saw how sickly and fragile he was, their hearts failed, and none of them consented to undertake so important a charge.³¹ Little, indeed, could it have been anticipated that the delicate boy was fated, not only to outlive his energetic and robust brother, Henry, but even to become, in times of danger, one of the hardiest and healthiest of those who fought on Edgehill, and at Naseby. The constitution of Charles was

³⁰ Kennet's Hist. England, p. 1.

³¹ Sir Robert Carey's Memoirs, p. 201.

invigorated in his vicissitudes, and perfected by the toils of a soldier's life.

That he should reign over this country was foretold by second sight. When James the First was preparing to remove from Scotland, there came to the Court an aged Highland chief, to take a solemn leave of his sovereign. The Queen and her children were present. The old man, after addressing a great deal of affectionate and sage advice to the King, turned to the children, and passing by Henry, he kissed with great ardour and deep respect the hands of his younger brother, the Duke Charles, as then he was called.

The King strove to correct what he fancied was a mistake on the part of the chief, and to direct his attention to the heir apparent, the fit object of such homage. But the Highlander heeded not those hints; he continued to gaze upon and to address the infant Charles; saying that he knew to whom he addressed himself. "This child," he exclaimed, "will be greater than his elder brother, and will convey his father's name and title to succeeding generations." "This," said Dr. Pernichief, Charles's tutor, "was conceived to be dotage; but the event gave it the credit of a prophecy, and confirmed that some long experienced souls in the world, before their dislodging, arrive to the height of prophetic spirits."³² A long

³² Kennet's Hist. England.

period of fragility seemed to throw doubt upon the gratuitous prophecy of the aged chief. Fortunately, Sir Robert Carey, to whom the charge of the drooping child was entrusted, was an estimable person, incapable of anything deceitful, or unjust—a “plain, honest gentleman.”³³ Those who wished ill to him and to his wife rejoiced at this selection, for they were certain that the prince would never be reared.

The weakly Charles was four years of age when consigned to the care of Sir Robert Carey. He could not, at this age even, stand alone; his ancles appeared to be out of joint. The King, with his characteristic conceit and want of gentle feeling, was disposed to use the most violent remedies and measures to cure the defects at which his pride was offended. The nostrums which he recommended were worthy of Martinus Scriblerus. But he found a champion of the helpless child in Lady Carey. “Many a battle my wife had with the King, but she still prevailed,” writes Sir Robert Carey.³⁴ The King, nevertheless, wished that the string under the young prince’s tongue might be cut; for the child, it was thought, would never speak. Then he proposed wire boots for his sinews and feet,

³³ Goodman’s Life, vol. i., p. 7.

³⁴ Carey’s Memoirs, p. 200.

but Lady Carey stood firm, and the Monarch was obliged to yield to a woman's arguments.

The boy grew daily stronger, and repaying Lady Carey's good care, gained health under her mild auspices, "both in body and mind."³⁵ Still the impediment in his voice continued; his countenance exhibited that mournful expression which was doubtless the natural consequence of a weakly childhood, and of the consciousness of bodily defects, which is the most likely of any circumstances to depress the buoyancy of the young.

To the inevitable solitude of ill-health, Charles probably owed his prudence, his early piety, and his taste for elegant pursuits. Villiers, in after life, found his love of pictures and medals one road to Charles's affections, by producing a sympathy between himself and the young prince. Charles was also, for his age, an accomplished theologian, and notwithstanding the impediment in his utterance, he could discourse to the admiration of all who heard him, on topics of general interest. With the traveller, the mechanic, and the scholar, he was equally fluent, meeting them on their own subjects, and imparting knowledge to the learned. He improved, too, in those diversions, and exercises which were then considered indispens-

³⁵ Carey's Memoirs.

able to the character of a gentleman. "He rid," says his tutor, Dr. Pernichief, "the great horse very well; and on the little saddle he was not only adroit, but a laborious hunter or fieldman." ³⁶

The temper of Charles is said to have been tinctured with obstinacy; and his old Scottish nurse reported him to have been of a very evil nature, even in his infancy; whilst another attendant taxes him with being, "beyond measure, wilful and unthankful." ³⁷ How far, in these uncured qualities, "springing like rank weeds in the heart," we may trace some of the fatal errors in Charles's career—his pertinacious adherence, especially when King, to Villiers, whether his favourite was right or wrong, is a matter of curious speculation.

But Dr. Pernichief, who knew Charles well, only allows that his "childhood was blemished with supposed obstinacy, for the weakness of his body inclining him to retirement, and the imperfections of his speech rendering discourse tedious and unpleasant, he was suspected to be somewhat perverse," a construction often put upon the deportment of a bashful, sad child. Such were his defects; and, as far as

³⁶ Inedited MS. in the State Paper Office. Domestic, Nov. 1616.

³⁷ Miss Aikins' Life of Charles I., vol. i., p. 55, 56., from Sir Philip Warwick's; also Lilly's Observations, p. 60.

his royal father was concerned, they were more offensive to the pride of the king, than painful to the tenderness of a parent. All, however, acknowledged that the youth of the accomplished Charles had hitherto been irreproachable, and that, if he manifested not the powerful intellect and extended views of his late brother, he resembled him in his love of virtue, his sense of honour, and in the difficult task of being dutiful and respectful to parents who were frequently at variance.

He now came, at the age of sixteen, before his future subjects, with this singular disadvantage, that the death of his elder brother was still a subject of lamentation. The clergy, especially, could not forget one whose staunch Protestantism gave them the assurance of a steady friend.

“Henry, Prince of Wales, was still,” says a contemporary writer, “so much in men’s minds, that Andrews, Bishop of Ely, preaching at court, prayed solemnly for him, without recalling himself.”³⁸ The Queen, too, refused to be comforted, and upon the first public occasion on which Charles appeared, declined being present, lest the ceremonial should revive her grief.

³⁸ Inedited MS. in the State Paper Office. Domestic, Nov. 1616.

Many could remember that at his installation into the Order of the Bath, at four years of age, Charles, unable to walk, was carried in the arms of the Lord High Admiral to the rites which, referring to chivalric observances and martial deeds, seemed a sort of mockery to the infant Prince. Those who recalled that hour, now beheld in the royal youth, who at his creation as Prince of Wales appeared before them, a graceful and manly figure set off to advantage by dress, and other circumstances.

In an old print, engraved by Renold Estraake, he is represented, as Prince of Wales, in a slouched hat with a long falling feather; his juvenile, and very slender form clad in a tight vest; a sash over the right shoulder is tied with a large bow under the left arm, and the ends are fringed with jewels. Around his waist is a scarf, also edged with a fringe of pearls and jewels. A stuffed skirt, richly embroidered and adorned, descends almost to the knee. His boots are apparently of some soft material, being creased; the tops richly decorated with jewels. Thus attired, and mounted on a superb horse, the head of which was adorned with a Phoenix in flames, emblematically complimentary, Charles presented himself to the people. Such was his costume before

he visited Spain, and imbibed a love of the graceful cloak, the Spanish hat, and Vandyke collar.

His manners, serious though courteous, were highly acceptable to the majority of those who gazed upon him, when, on the eve of All Saints' day, October 31st, 1616, Charles was created Prince of Wales. His very stammering began to be approved as a mark of wisdom; and "obloquy, it was said, never played the fool so much as in imputing folly to the heir apparent."

Buckingham, although twenty-four years of age, seems by the earliest portrait that there is of him—the engraving by Simon Pass, in 1617—to have had a most youthful appearance. In that picture, taken when he was made an Earl, and therefore during the ensuing year, he is depicted in a tight doublet, with a small white collar edged with Vandyke lace, and closed with one row of rich pearls down the centre. A cloak hangs over one shoulder, but the other displays a short sleeve, or epaulet, opening above the elbow, and having underneath a richly-worked sleeve, confined at the wrist by a deep cuff, fringed, and turned back; his doublet is richly guarded with lace. At this period, a very slight moustache is seen upon his upper lip, and the pointed

beard, which is afterwards to be found in all his portraits, is not observable.

The ceremonials performed on this occasion were such as the people of this country have ever dearly loved; and, without considering that they emptied the royal coffers, and compelled James to resort to expedients for raising money which rendered him a continual debtor to the bounty and loyalty of his subjects, eventually taxing too far their liberality, they loudly extolled them on this occasion. It must, however, have been a cheering sight when the young Prince came in state from Barn Elms to Whitehall, accompanied by a retinue of lords and gentlemen of honourable rank. At Chelsea he was met by the Lord Mayor and citizens, in separate barges; and the sounds of martial music, or, as the chronicler of the day terms it, "the royal sound of drum and trumpet," the sight of a crowd of people on the shore and in boats, the rich banners and streamers," with many trophies and ingenious devices which met him on the water, must have presented as festive a scene as ever was enacted on the bosom of the river Thames.

The speeches addressed were, of course, in verse. They were proffered by a female figure, representing London, seated upon a sea unicorn,

with six Tritons supporting her, accompanied by Neptune and the two rivers, Thames and Dee. This personage addressed the young prince in the following terms :—

Treasures of hope and jewel of mankind,
Richer no kingdome's head did ever see ;
Adorn'd in titles, but much more in mind,
The love of many thousands speake in thee ;

The ode went on to enumerate the blessings to be anticipated from the promising virtues of Charles, and concluded :—

Welcome, oh, welcome—all faire joyes attend thee,
Glorie of life, to safety we commend thee.

After this address, the young Prince was wafted down to Whitehall Stairs, where he landed. Passing on to the palace, he saluted the King, who stood on the palace stairs. The ceremony of creation, which took place on the following Monday, was performed in the hall of Whitehall Palace ; and at night, “to crown it with more heroical honour, fortie worthy gentlemen of the ten noble societies of Innes of Court, and every way qualified by birth to break three staves, three swords, and exchange ten blows a-piece,” encountered each other. The delicate health of the Prince, and the late season of the year, prevented any great procession at the creation, but it was commemorated by tilting

at the ring, to give great lustre and honour to the occasion, and among fourteen names of high degree, is found, among the challengers, that of Viscount Villiers, his first appearance in the tilt yard. Among the gallants who flaunted it out with the greatest bravery, are to be found many famous in successive times.³⁹

Notwithstanding the sanction which James gave to a growing intimacy between the heir apparent and his favourite, there had been various early disagreements between them, which delayed the reciprocal affection which the King strove to promote between Charles and Buckingham. Their confidence was, in truth, the growth of years, and was impeded by several incidents, which those who were adverse to Villiers were eager to notice and to record. It was generally expected that a jealousy between them would defeat the King's wishes, and divide the court into two parties; and the following letter imparts one of those incidents upon which such anticipations were founded:—

³⁹ The Lord Seymour, who had married the Lady Arabella Stuart, was among a set of newly-created Knights of the Bath; and Tom Carew and Phil Lytton, third son of Sir Rowland Lytton, of Knebworth, Herts., “were squires of high degree, for cast and bravery; the one being esquire to Lord Beauchamp, the other to his cousin, Rowland St. John.—Letter from Mr. Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton. State Paper Office, November 4th.

Letter of Edward Sherburn to Lord Holland.

“ March 14, 1615.

“ There is a speech in court of the distaste Sir George Villiers hath given the Prince about a ring. The manner, as I have heard it, is thus : The Prince coming one afternoon into the Presence at Newmarket, with Sir George Villiers, and discoursing with him, fixed his eyes upon a ring which Sir George Villiers had upon his finger, which, taking from him, put it upon one of his own ; and having occasion to pull out his pocket-handkerchief, the ring, being too large for the Prince’s finger, fell into his pocket. The Prince parting from him, not thinking of the ring, the next morning, Sir George Villiers, meeting the Prince in His Majesty’s presence again, and finding the Prince to take no notice of his ring, asked His Highness for it ; to which he answered, that in good faith he knew not what he had done with it ; whereat Sir George Villiers flew into such a passion, whether it was in regard of the value, or of the piece, as he left the Prince, and went immediately to the King, exceedingly disconcerted. The King, observing some distemper in him, demanded the occasion. Expressing the same with some earnestness, Sir George told the King that the Prince had lost a ring of his, which did much trouble him. The

King, moved thereat, sent for the Prince, and used such bitter language to him, as forced His Highness to shed tears, telling him also not to return to His Majesty until he had found it, and restored the ring to Sir George Villiers. The Prince, after he came from the King, gave commandment to Sir Robert Carey to search in the pockets of his breeches which he wore that day, when by good fortune the ring was found, and by Sir Robert Carey delivered to Sir George Villiers. By this a man may see the force of the King's affection, which is boundless, and so likewise may be seen how far beyond reason presumption may transport a man. What the consequence of this and the like will be, time must produce. Only this much is conceived, that the favour of the King on this particular cannot continue, because there wants a sound foundation to uphold so great a building. Thus much I adventure to write unto your lordship, whom I beseech to keep this in your own custody, or else to commit it to the fire." ⁴⁰

Another occurrence, trivial under other circumstances, seemed to indicate that no harmony was likely to exist between Charles and Villiers. One day, as they were walking in the gardens of Greenwich Palace, they approached a fountain,

⁴⁰ Inedited State Papers. Domestic, 1616, 1617.

near which was a statue of Bacchus: this figure was so constructed, after the fashion of ancient waterworks, that, by touching a spring, the water was emitted. The Prince, grave as he usually appeared, was that day in high spirits. He touched the spring, the water spouted forth, and suffused the face of the favourite. Villiers was greatly offended. The King took his part, not only reproving severely his son, but adding the father's correction of two boxes on the ears. Those who stood by were certain that this boyish frolic and its termination would ruin Villiers with the Prince. That it did not, is a proof of the good disposition of Charles, who, perhaps, did not the less admire Villiers because he had resented an act of impertinence even from an heir apparent.⁴¹

The partiality which James now openly manifested for Villiers drew down upon him the animadversions of the world; and when he trusted him as the associate of his son, invectives were loud and frequent. Although it was the fashion of the day to impute to the sovereign the wisdom of Solomon, lamentations were poured forth upon the unworthiness of those in whom he confided. "Is it not prodigious," writes

⁴¹ Inedited letter in the State Paper Office, March 8, 1616, addressed to Sir Dudley Carleton.

one historian, "that a Prince, who was as wise as the beloved son of David, should commit the reins of government to a callow youth, of no more capacity than is enough to qualify a modern beau?"⁴² "For an old king," observes Roger Coke, "he having reigned in England and Scotland fifty-one years, to doat upon a young favourite scarce of age, yet younger in understanding, though old in vice as any of his time, and to commit the whole ship of the commonwealth by sea and land to such a Phaeton, is a precedent without any example."⁴³ Not only Villiers, it is added, but even his mother, began now to influence all matters of public concern; no places were disposed of without her consent, and as much court was paid to her as to her son.⁴⁴

Many of the animadversions thus thrown upon Villiers proceeded from the laxity of his moral code. On this point, the accusations brought forward are vague, and therefore difficult to be repelled. They were, in some instances, the effect of a general impression that Villiers was a friend of Laud and a favourer of Armenianism; and originated with the Puritans.

No instance of great dereliction from propriety

⁴² Oldmixon's History of England, p. 31.

⁴³ Roger Coke's Delection.

⁴⁴ Oldmixon.

being recorded, it may be safely inferred that at this time public decorum was, at all events, not outraged by Villiers, whatever the private course of his existence may have been ; and however humiliating it is to reflect that a character so noble, so incapable of baseness, of such fair promise, may yet have been tinged with vices that infallibly brush away much of the finest attributes of virtuous youth, it must, at the same time, be allowed, that to remain incorrupt in the reign of James, would have argued almost super-human strength of character.

“Nothing,” relates Arthur Wilson, “but bravery and feasting, the parents of debauchery and rioting, flourished among us. There is no theme for history where men spill more drink than blood.” And he justly remarks that the boasted Halcyon days of peace cease to be a blessing when they “bring a curse” with them ; the curse of licentious pleasures and disgraceful idleness ; and that thus war is more happy in its effects than peace, “if it takes the distemper that grows by long surfeit without destroying the body.”⁴⁵

In spite, however, of the animadversions of foes, and the still more injurious temptations proffered by unworthy friends, the public character of Buckingham maintained for some time its integrity.

⁴⁵ Wilson's History of the Reign of James I.

His errors, real or imputed, were not at first such as to lower him in the eyes of society. He appeared, as Lord Clarendon observes, "the most glorious star that ever shined in any court; insomuch that all nations persecuted him with love and wonder, as fast as the King with fancy; and to his last he never lost any of his lustre."⁴⁶

His mother assisted in the aggrandizement of her favourite son. It was her office to teach his kindred, as fast as they came up to the metropolis, "to put on a court dress and air." The King, who had hitherto hated women, soon began to have his palace crowded with the female relations of Villiers; "little children did run up and down the royal apartments like rabbit-starters about their burrows." And the monarch, who could never endure his queen or his own family near him, made no remonstrance at this inconvenience, whilst the censorious, who decided that the favourite had no merit except that "he looked well, dressed well, and danced well," were outrageous in their wrath. So well, indeed, did he "look," that James, more and more enchanted with that open and beaming countenance, gave him the name of "Steenie," in allusion to one of the pictures in Whitehall, by an Italian master, representing the first martyr, Stephen.

⁴⁶ *Reliquiæ Wottonianæ*, p. 194.

Villiers now enjoyed the different dignities and offices of Viscount Villiers, Baron of Whaddon, Justice in Oire of all the forests and parks beyond Trent, Master of the Horse, and Knight of the Garter. But these were not sufficient in the sight of James. On the seventh of January, the favourite was created Earl of Buckingham, upon such short notice, that the drums and trumpets which should have been in the Chamber of Presence, at Whitehall (but not have sounded), were not in attendance. Villiers, in his surcote and hood, in an ordinary hat, and with his rapier, passed from the Council Chamber, over the terrace, through the great gateway, into the Chamber of Presence. He was assisted by the Earl of Suffolk, Lord Treasurer, and the Earl of Worcester, afterwards the gallant defender of Raglan Castle, all in robes and coronets. The Lord Chamberlain met them at the door of the Presence Chamber, where Villiers was duly presented to the King and Queen. The ceremonial, at which he figured alone, no other peer being created, was not followed by a supper, and therefore, adds Camden, "no style with largess proclaimed."⁴⁷

This new honour enabled its object to appear

⁴⁷ From an autograph MS.—Camden, quoted by Nichols, vol. iii., p. 233.

with still greater splendour and importance, at the performance of the new masque of Christmas, by Ben Jonson ; it was represented on Twelfth night, and amongst the performers were Richard Barbadge, an original performer in several of Shakespeare's plays, and John Heminge, who signed the "address to the reader" of Shakespeare's folio works. In the course of the masque, the Earl of Buckingham danced with the Queen ; and soon afterwards the society of the Middle Temple strove to conciliate him by entertaining him with a supper and a masque.⁴⁸ At the end of the month Buckingham was made a Privy Councillor, the youngest man that had ever received that honour. He also contrived to get his brother Christopher made either one of the Grooms or one of the Gentlemen of the Bedchamber, upon which creation the following rhyme was circulated:—

⁴⁸ It was suggested that Villiers might have been entered at the Middle Temple, but of that circumstance there is no evidence. "Not knowing the sacred antiquitie of anie of their houses, the chronicler set downe their names in the same order as that in which they were presented to his Majestie." See Nichols, iii. 213, from Howe's Chronicle. It is well known that in former times only men of gentle birth were entitled to be entered as students of law in the Temple—a relic of the statutes maintained in strict force by the Knights' Templars.

“Above the skies shall Gemini rise,
And twins the Court shall pester;
George shall back his brother Jack,
And Jack his brother Kester.”⁴⁹

It was about this time, probably, that Buckingham was first beheld drawn about in that coach with six horses, which was not only wondered at as a novelty, but “imputed to him as a mastering pride.” He had already excited the indignation of the English public by his appearance in a sedan chair; and when seen carried upon men’s shoulders, the populace raised an outcry against him in the streets, “loathing,” says Arthur Wilson, “that men should be brought to as servile a condition as horses.” The chair was, however, forgiven, and soon sedans came into general use. But the coach was the theme of every tongue; it was not that the vehicle was strange to the people, for it had been introduced in the late reign, but then only two horses were used; and when Buckingham, in all his bravery of attire, was beheld drawn by six prancing steeds, acclamations were general. The old Earl of Northumberland heard those murmurs in his prison in the Tower, and resolved that, should he ever recover his liberty, he would outvie the favourite. Accordingly, when in 1621 he was set

⁴⁹ Nichols, 244.

at liberty, he appeared in the city of London, and at Bath, with eight horses; as much to the amusement, probably, of him whom he strove to outvie, as to the amazement of the admiring public.⁵⁰ It required, indeed, no ordinary fortune to keep up this state; and the King so much disapproved of expensive equipages in any but the great, that he subsequently entertained a notion of imposing a tax of 40*l.* per annum, on all who, below a certain degree, kept a coach, and of bestowing the proceeds of the tax on decayed captains.⁵¹

No clamours affected Buckingham long during this period of his life; for, although there were occasionally some boisterous demonstrations of disapproval, the affections of the majority of the people returned to him shortly after a temporary unpopularity. And here, observes Lord Clarendon, in his parallel between the Earl of Essex and Buckingham, "the fortunes of our great personages met when they were both the favourites of the princes, and of the people. But their affections to the Duke of Buckingham were very short lived."⁵²

⁵⁰ Brydges's Peers of James I.

⁵¹ State Papers, vol. cix., 26. See Calendars of State Papers, edited by Mrs. Everett Green.

⁵² Reliquiæ Wottonianæ, 195.

CHAPTER IV.

THE KING'S PROJECTS—A JOURNEY TO SCOTLAND—
OBSTACLES TO THAT INTENTION—WANT OF MONEY
—£100,000 RAISED IN THE CITY—DISLIKE OF THE
PEOPLE TO THIS JOURNEY, ON ACCOUNT OF EXPENSE
—JAMES SETS OUT, MARCH 13TH, 1616-1617—HIS
ATTENDANT COURTIER, SIR JOHN ZOUCHE, SIR GEORGE
GORING, SIR JOHN FINETT—CHARACTERISTICS OF
EACH—SURPASSING QUALITIES OF BUCKINGHAM—
OBJECTS OF JAMES'S JOURNEY TO EDINBURGH—
ANECDOTE OF LORD HOWARD OF WALDEN—DISPUTA-
TIONS AT ST. ANDREWS—THE KING KNIGHTS MANY
OF THE YOUNG COURTIER—OFFENCE GIVEN AT
EDINBURGH BY LAUD—A PROJECT TO ASSASSINATE
BUCKINGHAM SUSPECTED—JAMES'S PROGRESS CON-
CLUDED—HIS VISIT TO WARWICK—AFFAIRS RELATING
TO SIR EDWARD COKE AND HIS FAMILY—BASE CON-
DUCT OF ALL THE PARTIES CONCERNED—MEANNESS
OF BACON—HIS LETTERS—FRANCES HATTON—CON-
TRAST BETWEEN HER AND THE EARL OF OXFORD
BROUGHT FORWARD BY LADY HATTON—COKE RE-
STORED TO FAVOUR—MARRIAGE OF FRANCES HATTON
TO LORD PURBECK.

CHAPTER IV.

EARLY in the year 1616-17, James determined to visit Scotland—a resolution which was opposed, somewhat to the displeasure of the King, by Buckingham. But the King was soon pacified, and the journey was decided upon. Some obstacles existed ; for instance, the want of money, which was to be borrowed from rich citizens before the monarch's project could take place ; then it was expected to prove a “hard journey,” for it was thought the Court would reach the North before there would be grass for their horses ; and even the Scots expressed a wish that the visitation might be deferred.⁵³

The entertainment given to Monsieur de la

⁵³ Nichols, iii., p. 245.

Tour, the Ambassador Extraordinary from the French King, delayed somewhat this freezing expedition. At length, it was decided that James should set out on the twenty-second of February; though money came in slowly; and it was found extremely difficult to raise the sum of 100,000*l.* in the metropolis. "Yet," observes a contemporary, "there is much urging, and in the end it must be done, though men be never so much discouraged." To propitiate the presiding Lord Mayor, he was knighted, and received, with his companions, the King's thanks for the 100,000*l.* in prospect, which was, however, to be raised, *nolens volens*, whilst men of low condition were called in to bear the burden.

It was not until the thirteenth of March that the King and Queen, with Prince Charles, removed to Theobalds, preparatory to the progress of James northwards. Never was undertaking so much disliked by the generality of the people, chiefly on account of the immense expense which it involved. It was now fourteen years since his Majesty had visited his Scottish dominions. "He began the journey," says Wilson, "with the spring, warming the country, as he went, with the glories of the Court;" and carrying with him those boon companions who best could shorten the way, and consume the nights by their pranks and

buffoonery. These were Sir George Goring, Sir Edward Zouch, and Sir John Finett—men “who could fit and obtemperate the King’s humour;” and it may, therefore, be readily supposed what description of gentlemen they were. Sir George Goring was a native of Hurst-perpoint, in Sussex, in which county his descendants still flourish. He had been brought up in the Court of Queen Elizabeth, his father being one of the gentlemen pensioners; and had been gentleman in ordinary to Prince Henry. He now went as lieutenant of the gentlemen pensioners, and accordingly was despatched with others of that band by sea.⁵⁴ Goring had attracted the regard of James by his sound sense and vein of jocular humour; like Sir Edward Zouch and Sir John Finett, he was the “chief and master fool” of the Court—sometimes “presenting David Dromore and Archie Armstrong, the King’s fools, on the back of other fools, till they fell together by the ears, and fell one over another.” Goring, like his colleagues in his respectable employment, is said to have got more by his fooling than other people did by their wisdom; he was, indeed, regarded as a sort of minor favourite, yet Buckingham evinced no jealousy of him, and procured him, in 1629, the title of Baron Goring, of Hurst-

⁵⁴ Nichols, vol. iii., p. 243.

pierre-point.⁵⁵ Finett and Zouch were equally expert with Goring in “antick” dances, disguises in masqueradoes, and extemporaneous foolery ; but in this last accomplishment Sir John Millicent, whose name is not among the King’s retinue in Scotland, excelled them all ; and was the “most commended for notable fooling,”⁵⁶ It was found, however, impossible to surpass Buckingham in the accomplishment of dancing. His grace, and the fondness he showed for the pastime, brought it into fashion. “No man,” writes an historian, “dances better ; no man runs or jumps better ; and, indeed, he jumps higher than ever Englishman did in so short a time — from a private gentleman to a dukedom.”⁵⁷ He now reigned sole monarch in the King’s favour ; and everything he did was admired “for the doer’s sake.” The king was never contented, except when near him ; nor could the Court grandees be well out of his presence ; all petitions, therefore, “whether for place or office, for Court or Commonwealth, were addressed to him.”

⁵⁵ In 1645, he was advanced to the Earldom of Norwich. He died in 1662, leaving his title to George Goring, the celebrated loyalist, of whom so masterly a portrait has been drawn by Clarendon.

⁵⁶ Nichols, ii. p. 38, note ; apud Sir Anthony Weldon.

⁵⁷ Kennet’s England, vol. ii. p. 708.

The King proceeded by easy journeys of ten, twelve, and seventeen miles a day northwards. It is curious to find him resting a day and a night at the home of Sir Oliver Cromwell of Hinchinbrook, near Huntingdon.⁵⁸ At Lincoln, he healed fifty persons of the Evil, a gracious act which was succeeded by an attendance upon a cock-fighting, at which His Majesty was very merry. This diversion was varied by horse-racing.

On his arrival near Edinburgh, the King took up his arrival at Seton House, the seat of the Earl of Wintoun, whose family continued to be faithful to the descendants of James during the calamitous contest between the modern Stuarts and the Hanoverians. James remained in Scotland until the fifth of July, when he returned by the west coast of Scotland to Carlisle.

The three great objects of his Majesty's journey to Scotland, were the extension of episcopal authority; the establishment of some ceremonies in religion; and the elevation of the civil above the ecclesiastic authority.⁵⁹ It does not, however, appear that Buckingham took any active part in these designs, or that he was at this period regarded in any other light than as one of the ministering agents to the amusement of

⁵⁸ Nichols, iii., p. 258.

⁵⁹ Hume's Hist. of England, iii., 83.

James's vacant hours. It is possible that he may have viewed Scotland with that prejudice with which the English at that time regarded that nation. The revenues of that country being then insufficient to maintain the Government, Buckingham probably deemed it, as others did, nothing but a drain upon the resources of England—a barren ground from which “a beggarly rabble (like a fluent spring),” to use the words of Osborne, “was for ever to be found crossing the River Tweed.”⁶⁰ The national prejudice was likewise considerably strengthened by the King's favourite, but abortive scheme of union between the two crowns; thus dividing the kingdom into halves, so that he, “a Christian king under the gospel, should no longer be a polygamist to two wives, under which discreditable imputation he conceived that the partition of the kingdom placed him.”⁶¹ Whether Buckingham may have been propitiated by the hospitality of the Scots or not, or whether he thought with Sir Anthony Weldon that “the country was too good for them that possess it, and too bad for others to be at the charge to conquer it,” does not appear. In some passages of the Royal Progress it is most likely that the young courtier found but little delight. At St. Andrews, disputations in

⁶⁰ Osborne's Tradit., Memorials of King James, p. 422.

⁶¹ Somers's Tracts, 83

divinity, and at Stirling in philosophy, were honoured by the King's presence. They were delivered by some members of the University of Edinburgh, and were to have been held in the college there, had not public business interfered."⁶²

For a time the presence of James in Scotland produced all the good effects which the aspect of royalty generally ensures. The English became extremely popular in the northern capital, then rarely visited by the great and fashionable. "We hear little out of Scotland," writes Mr. Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton, "but that the Parliament is now beginning, and that our English are extraordinarily respected, and friendly to the nobles, to whom the King makes much caresses, and receives them as his guests. The Earl of Buckingham is made one of the council there, and takes his place above the rest as Master of the Horse. They speak that he shall be made Mar-

⁶² The subjects were these :—First, That sheriffs and other inferior magistrates should not be hereditary. With this, James was so well pleased that he turned to the Marquis of Hamilton, Hereditary Sheriff of Clydesdale, and said, "James, you see your cause is lost." Secondly, On the rate of locomotion. The respondent in this disputation quoting Aristotle, the King remarked, "These men know the mind of Aristotle as well as he did himself when alive." Thirdly, On the origin of fountains or springs.

quis of Scotland, and the Lord Compton an Earl, to counterpoise the Scotch that have been ennobled here.”⁶³ James was indeed profuse beyond measure in his titles during this progress.

“All our peers’ sons that went with the King,” adds the same writer, “were knighted there that were undubbed before, and all the gentlemen of Yorkshire, so that there is scarce left an esquire to uphold the race, and the order is descended somewhat lower, even to Adam Hill, that was the Earl of Montgomery’s barber, and to one Jeane, husband to the Queen’s laundress, our host of Doncaster; and to another that lately kept an inn at Rumford; and a youth, one Conir, is come into consideration as to become a prince of favourites, brought in by the Earl of Buckingham, and the wags talk as if he were in possibility to become Viscount Conir. All the mean officers of the household are also said to be knighted, so that ladies are like to be in little request.”⁶⁴

But it was not in the nature of things that affairs should go on without some inconveniences and apprehensions, and great offence was given in Scotland, when, at the funeral of one of the guard, who was buried after the English ritual, Laud,

⁶³ Nichols’s Progresses, vol. iii., 367.

⁶⁴ State Paper Office, Domestic, 1616-1617.

then Dean of St. Paul's, desired those assembled to join him in recommending the soul of his deceased brother to Almighty God. He was afterwards obliged to retract, and to say that he had done this in a sort of civility rather than according to rule. Another exception was taken at his putting on a white surplice just at that part of the funeral service when the body was going to be put into the ground. The Dean of the royal chapel in Edinburgh also refused to receive the communion whilst Dr. Laud was kneeling.⁶⁵

During his residence in Edinburgh, the life of Buckingham was said to be endangered by a plot to assassinate him, a prelude, as it seemed, to the tragic doom which he afterwards encountered. In a letter from Sir Thomas Lake to Sir Ralph Winwood, dated from Brougham Castle, and written on the seventh of August, 1617, he thus refers to the peril which threatened the favourite :—

“All the news which is here, is that many lords have been busied about a fellow who, in his drink, spake some words as though he had an intention to kill my Lord of Buckingham. He is one of the guard of Scotland, his name is Carre, and said his intention was for that his lordship was the cause of Somerset's dismissal.

⁶⁵ Letter from Mr. Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton. Domestic, June 21, 1621. State Paper Office.

He has, since his being sober, confessed his words to my Lord of Lennox. I came out from the last house before some of the old lords of Scotland had done with him, and therefore can yet say no more to you. The words were spoken in Scotland. Some of my Lord of Buckingham's friends do doubt Carre was but set on."

On the twenty-seventh of the same month, the culprit had, it appears, proceeded far on his journey southward, as a prisoner, to take his trial in London for his meditated crime. "On Saturday last," writes Mr. Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton, "here past, by Ware, one Carre, a Scottish gentleman, being suspected and charged (together with four others of that family and name) to have conspired the death of the Earl of Buckingham, at his coming out of Scotland, and so was apprehended near Carlisle."⁶⁶

No further notice of this affair occurs in the correspondence from which it is derived; and it is possible that the plot was inferred from the hasty expressions of offended clansmen, and was found, on investigation, to be without sufficient proof to bring it into a court of law.

⁶⁶ Letter from Mr. Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton, August 27, 1617, dated, Ware Park. No mention is made of this attempt in any of the biographies of Buckingham. State Paper Office, Domestic.

Among the English peers who visited Scotland, the least popular was Lord Howard of Walden, eldest son of the Earl of Suffolk. This nobleman enjoyed the especial favour of King James; his name occurs in most of the courtly festivities of the day, as one appointed to appear foremost in all stately revels, and he received a more substantial proof of royal preference in being called to the House of Lords in the lifetime of his father. In the north, however, he was detested, chiefly on account of his ill usage of his wife, Elizabeth, daughter of George, Lord Harris, Earl of Dunbar, and likewise from his accustomed boasting of his influence with Buckingham, for it was a favourite saying of Lord Howard's, "that he, and none other, had an especial interest in the favourite."

Lord Howard seems to have been a mark at which the courtiers aimed their shafts of wit and ridicule; it was during the journey into Scotland that he came into collision with a nobleman of a very different character, James, second Marquis of Hamilton. This nobleman enjoyed, in a very uncommon degree, the confidence and esteem of his royal master, who was accustomed to call him familiarly by his Christian name. He held the office of Lord Steward of the Household, and Privy Councillor; and, in that capacity, was

doubtless often surprised, if not irritated, by the precedence and latitude given to Buckingham. By his countrymen, the Marquis was considered "to be the gallantest gentleman in all Scotland."

The following account is characteristic of the mingled idleness and dissension of a courtier's life:—

"Riding one day with the king, a-hunting, he, Lord Howard of Walden, asked the Marquis of Hamilton whether he were ever in love. He answered, Yes. What effects wrought it? saith he. His answer was, It made him fat, saucy, and ignorant. Other speeches passed just like this, but I proceed to the quarrels he had with him. The Marquis of Hamilton hath a page, whom my Lord Hay did liken, for his fairness of face, to the second daughter of the Lord Burghley, Mrs. Diana Cecil, admired so much by the Lord Walden, except he were unmarried. After my Lord Hay's departure thence, the Marquis, the Favourite, and Lord Walden being at dinner together, and the boy waiting at the table, the Marquis and my Lord Buckingham whispered and laughed, to which my Lord Walden said he knew what they laughed at, and that he, that said

⁶⁷ Letter from George Garrard to Sir Dudley Carleton, London, August 18th, 1617, from inedited State Papers. See also Brydges's Peers of James I., p. 160.

that, was but a fool. To which the Marquis replied that, 'were he a roaring boy, he would have flung a glass of wine in his face.' It was my Lord Hay had said it. He was his friend, and a noble gentleman, whom, in his absence, he would not have wronged, and, therefore, bid him, before he should answer it, draw his sword. But my Lord of Buckingham so talked with these lords that after dinner he did reconcile this business, the Lord Walden acknowledging him now, upon better consideration, to be a noble gentleman, and that he knew no other of my Lord Hay. This business fell out nigh a month before the king's coming from Scotland, though it came not to my knowledge since a week before the king's departure there, at what time the Marquis Hamilton was on the point to be sworn a councillor. The Lord Walden, remembering some of these former passages, and thinking to stop the conferring of this honour upon him, as is said, did acquaint Sir Edward Villiers, that the Marquis should say that if my Lord of Buckingham did not dispatch that business for him, of conferring the councillorship, that he would cut his throat, wishing him to tell it his brother, which he did; so that, when he met the Marquis, the Lord of Buckingham questioned him of that, who presently demanded the author, which he told him.

Then the Marquis departed, and presently sent the Lord Buckhurst to seek out the Lord Walden, with a challenge as was thought, but he could not be found. In the end he came to my Lord of Buckingham's chamber, where, it is said, he lamented by ill fortune to have these words spoken again, and from thence did not depart until by acknowledgments the quarrel was reconciled."

Buckingham appears, on this occasion, to have acted a kind and sensible part. His utmost discretion was soon called upon in an affair upon which the annals of the time ring changes, and the details of which present the most curious combat of wordly passions, and the most fatal results of misdirected influence, that can be conceived.

In spite of a "fearful dream" of Queen Anne's, reported to James as a warning, his progress was not shortened. He spent several days at Brougham Castle, the residence of Francis Clifford, fourth Earl of Cumberland, whose daughter, the celebrated Anne Clifford, afterwards repaired the castle, which suffered during the civil wars; but which, so vain were her exertions, has since been permitted to fall into ruins. The expenses entailed by the king's visit, including the music performed in his presence, were considerable, and helped to

ruin the lord of the castle, an easy, improvident man, whose allusion to the tax imposed by this royal visitation is almost touching. "I fynde plainly," he thus wrote to his son, "upon better consideration, that the charge for that entertainment will grow very great, besyde the musick, and that instead of lessening, my charge in general encreaseth, and new paiments come on which without better providence hereafter cannot be performed."⁶⁸ In his progress from one mansion or manor-house to another, James visited several of those families whose names became afterwards distinguished among the adherents of his unfortunate son. At Hoghton Tower, in Lancashire, at that time the principal seat of the Hoghton family, but now unhappily a ruin, still containing an apartment called King James's room; though the monarch is said to have conferred the honour of knighthood, which he had dispensed very freely during his progress upon his subjects, on the loin of beef, that act being also one of the last achievements of his journey. He visited also Lathom House, the seat of the Stanleys; and was received with great demonstrations of respect and joy at Stafford, where the Earl of Essex, who lived in an honoured retirement at Chartley Castle,

⁶⁸ Nichols, vol. iii., p. 392, from Whitaker's Hist. of Craven.

rode before him into the town. At Warwick, he was entertained by Sir Fulke Grevill, who was then the master of Warwick Castle, which he had found, on taking possession of it, in a ruinous state, and used as a county jail.⁶⁹ In the hall of Leicester Hospital, that charitable foundation, endowed by Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, for twelve Brethren, James was entertained with a supper; an event of which a tradition still remains attached to the half-monastic institution in which it occurred. Sir Fulke Grevill had his own private motives to induce him to extend his marks of respect to Buckingham, as well as to the king; for, shortly afterwards, we find him a suitor to the niece of Buckingham, Lady An-

⁶⁹ Nichols, iii., p. 434. In the harangue addressed to the king on his entrance into Warwick, there is this passage:—"This castle, alsoe moste desirous to receive you, the greatest guest that ever she entertained, would speake in noe lower key, but that her late disgrace abateth her courage. After shee became the jaylor's lodge, interchanging the goulden chaines of her noble erle's with the iron fetters of wretched prisoners, given over to be inhabited by battes and owles, she is ashamed to speake before you." Nichols's, vol. iii., p. 431.

This speech was transcribed for Nichols's Progresses, by the late William Hamper, Esq., F.S.A., from the Black Book of Warwick, a book preserved by the corporation.

Sir Fulke Grevill spent 20,000*l.* in restoring the Castle with its pleasaunce and gardens. To his care the preservation of that interesting structure is due.

derson, for her hand.⁷⁰ There can be no doubt, but that James and Buckingham visited Warwick Castle, but were not entertained there on account of its ruinous condition.

Whilst Buckingham was in Scotland, overtures were made to reconcile certain differences between him and Sir Edward Coke, then Lord Chief Justice in England. In order to comprehend the conduct which the favourite pursued in relation to that celebrated man, it becomes necessary to review a series of occurrences which had happened previously to the Scottish journey; to enter, likewise, into the topics of the day; and, above all, to refer to the prejudices of the king, and the resistance made to them by an honest, though a harsh, individual. These considerations are mixed up with matters of apparently private interest; yet are necessary to be unfolded, when the conduct of Villiers, and the history of his family, are the subject of narrative.

It will be remembered that the chief interest which James derived from the representation of the play of "Ignoramus" had arisen from the ridicule cast upon the practice of the common law. In several passages of that drama, Sir Edward Coke was supposed to be particularly

⁷⁰ Birch's MSS., 4173.

alluded to.⁷¹ This great lawyer had, in various ways, given offence ; he had termed the royal prerogative, in one of his speeches in Parliament, “a great overgrown monster;” and he had displayed a courage which redeemed his character from many of its demerits, by insinuating that the common law of England was in charge of being perverted. On two other notable points Coke had also offended the king; the one being the famous dispute respecting the Court of Chancery; the other, the still more celebrated case of the Commendams.⁷² In the former matter, the conduct of Coke is allowed to have been highly discreditable to him and his associates; in the latter, to have merited the warmest admiration.

Whatever view the public may have taken of these transactions, they formed the first plea for that ruin of Coke to which Buckingham is said to have given an impetus, by the intrusion of his

⁷¹ Nichols, vol. iii., p. 90.

⁷² “The Court of Chancery,” says the author of the *Life of Sir Edward Coke* (published for the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge), “had long exercised a jurisdiction, which had formed one of the articles against Wolsey, of revising and correcting judgments which had been obtained in the courts of common law.” It was not until the reign of James, that this privilege had been called into question. Sir Edward Coke, who was tenacious of the authority of the Common Law Courts, and the twelve judges, gave it as their opinion, that Chancery had no such power; and that

own interests upon the royal ear,⁷³ at this crisis of Coke's destiny. The King, summoning the Lord Chief Justice and the twelve judges to the council at Whitehall, delivered his opinions concerning their conduct in an harangue, in which he declared "that ever since his coming to the crown, the popular sort of lawyers had been the men that most effrontedly had trodden upon his prerogative;"⁷⁴ and, having expatiated upon their offences with his usual pedantry and prolixity, he dismissed them, declaring "that in his protection of them, and expediting of justice, he would walk in the steps of the ancient and best of kings." The firmness with which Coke conducted himself during the whole of this affair, whilst it won him a popularity which he would never otherwise have acquired, prepared the way for those who, from interested motives, sought his ruin, and, combined with his zeal and acute-

an appeal from a judgment at law could not be made except to Parliament. To this decision proceedings were instituted against the judges in the Star Chamber. The conduct of the judges and of the chief-justice in this matter, has been generally condemned.

⁷³ See an able Life of Sir Edward Coke, published by the Society for the Diffusion of Knowledge, p. 8. Also, Lord Campbell's Lives of the Chief Justices, Art. Coke, vol. i., p. 287.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

ness in the trial of Lord and Lady Somerset—an acuteness which the King, it is rumoured, had secret reasons to dread—completely undermined his credit at court.

In the intrigues which tended to ruin Coke, Buckingham certainly participated.⁷⁵ The first instance of rapacity in the young favourite is discernible at this period. Sir Henry Roper had for many years enjoyed the place of Chief Clerk for enrolling the pleas of the King's Bench; it was supposed to be worth 4000*l.* per annum. Being advanced in age, Sir Henry was disposed to relinquish the appointment, on condition of being made Lord Teynham, receiving the salary during his life. Buckingham seized this opportunity of improving his fortunes. He applied for the reversion of this office to be granted to two of his trustees during their lives—an application which had been successfully made by the Earl of Somerset formerly.⁷⁶ But the Lord Chief Justice stood in the way of this surrender on the part of Roper, and also of the proposed arrangement. He answered, upon first being solicited, “that he was old, and could not struggle”—a reply which

⁷⁵ Bacon's Letters, vol. ii., p. 85; taken from the Introduction to Bacon's Works by Stephens, p. 47.

⁷⁶ Biographia, Art. Coke.

was regarded as a compliance.⁷⁷ But when Sir Henry Roper actually surrendered the situation, and was created Lord Teynham, Coke changed his tone, and stated that, since the salaries of the judges in his court were very low, it would be desirable to increase them by the revenues of this office, which was at his disposal. Upon this, it was resolved by the King and his favourite to remove him, and to substitute on the Bench a more compliant judge. The avowed plea of this iniquitous proceeding was the conduct of Coke in the affair of the Commendams; but its real cause was his non-compliance with the views of Buckingham. Bacon, with his usual subserviency, augmented by his hatred of Coke, wrote to Villiers: "For Roper's place, I would have it by all means despatched, and therefore I marvel it lingereth." The "thing," he declared, was so reasonable, "that it ought to be done as soon as said." Unhappily for Coke, he thought otherwise.

It is hardly possible to conceive a line of conduct more degrading than that which Buckingham pursued in the whole of this affair. He forfeited by it all the credit due to him for the rejection of Sherborne, and the principle of which he had boasted, that he would not rise upon the ruins of others, was

⁷⁷ *Biographia*, Art. Coke, from Bacon's Works.

already effaced from his memory. Upon the third of October, 1616, Coke was desired to desist from the service of his place.⁷⁸ This intimation of a disgraceful act had come suddenly, for, on the week before, the King had been at a great entertainment, given by Lord Exeter at Wimbledon, and the Lady Hatton, the wife of the Lord Chief Justice, was there, and "well-graced, for the King had kissed her twice:" but this, it seems, was "but a lightening." On the following Sunday, Sir Edward Coke was sequestered from the council table, and prohibited from riding his circuit, his place being supplied by Sir Randolph Crew. "Some that wish him well," adds a contemporary, "fear the matter will not end here, for he is wilful and will take no counsel, and not seeking to make good his first errors, runs in worse, and entangles himself more and more, and gives his enemies such advantage to work upon the King's indignation towards him, that he is in great danger." Others scrupled not to say that he had been too busy in the late business (of Somerset), and had dived into secrets further than there was need. "It happens, also, that he had not carried himself advisedly and dutifully to His Majesty."⁷⁹ All these assigned

⁷⁸ Note to Bacon's Works, vol. ii., p. 85.

⁷⁹ Nichols, vol. ii., p. 178; from Birch's MSS., vol. iv., p. 173.

causes are points which tend somewhat to mitigate the censures which must be cast on Buckingham in this affair. Lady Hatton, too, a Cecil, but not endowed with the prudence of that sagacious family, and one of the fiercest of her sex, contributed to the downfall of her husband, by carrying herself very indiscreetly to the Queen, who forbade her the court. "The story," adds the same chronicler, "were long to tell; but it was about braving and uncivil words to the Lady Compton, George Villiers' mother, and vouching the Queen for her author." As usual,⁸⁰ to women was attributed all the far-spreading evil which pours out of contention.

A letter addressed by Coke to Buckingham, before his final removal from his pre-eminent station, must, one would imagine, have touched a harder heart than that of Villiers. Coke's words are described as "now being humble enough." His letter, though supplicatory, was not abject. He thanked Buckingham for having, by his honourable means, obtained a hearing for him. He entered manfully into the defence of his book of reports, to which objections had been made, which were the plea of his suspension from his usual judicial duties, "assuring his Lordship that

⁸⁰ Bishop Goodman, vol. ii., p. 166.

never any book was written of any human learning that was not in some part or other subject to exception.”⁸¹

This remonstrance was dispatched to Buckingham at a time when the heart of the favourite might have been softened by his own elevation, and by the general joy. It reached him just before the creation of Charles, Prince of Wales, and contained a request that the deeply-humbled Coke might be permitted to attend that ceremonial.⁸² There is no record that the entreaty was acceded to.

Until the end of November (1616) the fate of the Lord Chief Justice was undecided. The Queen, to her credit, and the Prince Charles, were urgent in his behalf. And a rumour now first began to prevail that the younger brother of the favourite, Sir John Villiers, who had an appointment in the Prince's household, was to marry Sir Edward Coke's daughter, with a dowry of 900*l.* in land from her father, and 2,100*l.* in land from Lady Hatton, together with Lord Teynham's office; but, in the meantime, the Lord Chief Justice was, in his fortunes, affected as it were with an “ague,” which has an alternate

⁸¹ Bishop Goodman, vol. ii., p. 166.

⁸² Ibid.

bad and good day.⁸³ The next report was that Coke was "quite off the hooks," and that orders had been sent to give him a *supersedeas*. The jest of the day was that four P's had lost him his place — Pride, Prohibitions, Præmunire, and Prerogative.⁸⁴ Shortly afterwards he was superseded, and had the mortification of knowing that Sir Henry Montagu, who was appointed in his stead, went with great pomp to Westminster Hall, accompanied by many noblemen, to the number of "fifty horse, the whole fry of the Middle Temple, and swarms of lawyers and officers."⁸⁵ That was a day of triumph for Buckingham.

The character of the most famous of English lawyers rose under this unmerited injury.⁸⁶ He bore his misfortune with calm dignity. It is related of him that when the new Chief Justice sent to buy from him his collar of S.S., he answered that he would not part with it, but would leave it to his descendants, that they might know that one day they had a Chief Justice to their ancestor. A remarkable popularity followed his degradation. Sir

⁸³ Nichols, from Birch's MS., p. 4172.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 227.

⁸⁶ Amos's Great Oyer of Poisoning, p. 418

Edward Coke was the first judge that had set the example of independence on the bench ; and his refusing to be tampered with in the disposal of a lucrative office caused him to be regarded as a martyr. Even the King, when he intimated at the Privy Council his intention to supersede Coke, did it with a sort of half shame, declaring that he thought him “in no way corrupt, but a good justice,” and adding “as many compliments as if he had meant to hang him with a silken halter.”⁸⁷ Such was the corruption of the times, such the utter want of all honourable principle, that it was well known that, had Coke been wise enough to take advantage of the proposed match between his daughter and Sir John Villiers, “he would have been that day Lord Chancellor.” His avarice had been the impediment to that marriage. A dowry of 10,000*l.* had been asked with his daughter—he had offered 10,000 marks, and “he had stuck at 1,000*l.* a year during his life,” letting fall certain idle words, that he would not buy the King’s favour too dear, “being so uncertain and variable.”⁸⁸

The public were at no loss, as Lord Campbell remarks, to account for the disgrace of Coke,

⁸⁷ Nichols, p. 227.

⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 225.

when they knew that his successor, before accepting his office, was obliged to bind himself to dispose of the chief clerkship for the benefit of Buckingham, and when they saw two trustees for Buckingham admitted to the place as soon as the new Chief Justice was sworn in.

Such had been the state of affairs before James and Villiers set out for Scotland; during their absence, the world was alternately amused and disgusted by the proceedings of Sir Edward Coke and his lady, regarding the match proposed between Sir John Villiers and their daughter.

This celebrated judge was peculiarly unhappy in his domestic life. Lady Elizabeth Hatton, his second wife, the sister of Thomas Burleigh, Earl of Exeter, and the widow of Sir Thomas Hatton, had brought him, along with a large fortune, the unpleasant acquisition of a partner violent, litigious, and uncrupulous. The very commencement of the inauspicious nuptials had been attended with trouble, the parties subjecting themselves to many inconveniencies from the irregularity of their marriage, which took place in a private house, without bans or licence. From the moment that the knot was tied, Coke found in

this new connection nothing but misery. Neither in private nor in public could his wife and he abstain from the sharpest contentions.

Their daughter—that object which should most surely have cemented a union—soon proved a new source of the bitterest feuds.

When Buckingham was in Scotland, an overture was made to him on the part of Sir Edward Coke, relating to the marriage of his youngest daughter to Sir John Villiers, the elder brother of the favourite. The proposal was made through Secretary Winwood, the friend of Coke, and was, at first, eagerly accepted by Buckingham; but, although it had these good auspices, there were obstacles which prevented its favourable course.

One of these was the dislike of the young lady to her appointed suitor, who was diseased, and troubled with a humour in his legs, and accounted not a long-lived man; so that, as was observed by Mr. Chamberlain, “there needed so much ado to get him a wife.” Another was the jealousy of Lady Hatton. Incensed that her husband should dare to dispose of her daughter without her consent, she carried her off, and secreted her in the house of Sir Edmund Withipole, near Oatlands, in Surrey. From that retreat, the young lady was re-

moved to the residence of Archibald, seventh Earl of Argyle, near Hampton Court.

Lady Hatton immediately hired a lodging in the town of Kingston; whence she was permitted to visit her daughter, but not to sleep under the same roof with her. "She kept her, however," observes a contemporary writer, "such company, that none else could have access to her."⁸⁹ This access was moderated, and her creatures, whom she had employed to take her daughter away, were questioned and committed. Finding herself forsaken by her friends, "who dared not show themselves too far in the business, and seeing," adds the same authority, "that she struggled in vain, Lady Hatton began to come about." At this juncture, Buckingham interfered. He wrote a letter which calmed the fury: she returned him an answer, "that if this way had been taken with her at first, they might have proceeded better."⁹⁰ Her husband was, however, now incensed beyond control. He procured a warrant from Secretary Winwood, and fetched away his daughter from Hampton Court, exceeding, indeed, the terms of his warrant, for he is said to have broken open the doors of the house

⁸⁹ Mr. Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton. State Paper Office. London, August 9th, 1617. Inedited.

⁹⁰ Nichols, iii., p. 371.

to obtain her. Lady Hatton was quickly engaged in pursuit of him; and "had not her coach tired," as it is related, "there would soon have been strange tragedies."⁹¹

Coke then conveyed his daughter to the care of Lady Compton Villiers, but the next day the clerk of the council was sent to take the custody of her, in his own house. The affair was heard before the Privy Council, when a violent contention amused the indifferent spectators, and aggravated the hatred of the parties concerned. Lady Hatton, in her vehemence, is said to have declaimed with a force worthy of Burbage, then the most popular actor of the day. At last, after much wrangling, a reconciliation was effected. Lady Hatton was induced, upon some conditions, to double the portion which her husband had offered, "and to make up the match and give it her blessing." Lady Compton Villiers and her sons repaired to Kingston, where they remained two or three days, "which," adds the writer, "makes the world think they grow to conclusion." The fact was, that finding she had no power to resist, Lady Hatton thought proper to give in with a good grace; thus commanding better terms with Coke than a

⁹¹ Letter from Mr. Chamberlain, before quoted.

further resistance would have procured, "and so," adds Mr. Chamberlain, "defeat her husband's purposes, towards whom, of late, she had carried herself very strangely, neither like a wife nor a wise woman."⁹²

Thus, Coke's "curst heart," as his wife termed it, was forced to yield to terms which he had never contemplated. The matter ended with the young lady's being sent to Hatton House, with orders that "Lady Compton and her son should have access to win and wear her." Meanwhile, all the world expected that King James, whose minute interference in the affairs of his courtiers equalled that of Henry the Eighth, would have mediated a peace between Sir Edward Coke and his wife; but James forbore, declaring that it "was a thing of more time and more care than he could afford to give the matter."

In this transaction, there is not a single individual who does not appear to have harboured some unworthy motive. Coke, notwithstanding the failure of his own matrimonial schemes, was ready to wed his daughter to Sir John Villiers, without the slightest regard to her wishes and affections.⁹³ Buckingham, his

⁹² Letter from Mr. Chamberlain, before quoted

⁹³ Stephens's Introduction to Bacon's letters, p. 42
Also Inedited Letters in the State Paper Offices
Domestic 1616, 17.

mother, and his brother were actuated by the most mercenary considerations. Lady Hatton and her daughter were aiming at a younger son of the Earl of Suffolk, Sir Robert Howard, who was subsequently prosecuted for a criminal intrigue with Frances Hatton, after she had become the wife of Sir John Villiers.

During the height of her opposition, the friends of Lady Hatton published a contract, said to have been signed, in the presence of her mother, by Frances Coke; and whether real, or merely contrived for the purpose of preventing the marriage with Sir John Villiers (a precontract being in those days as great an obstacle as a previous marriage), it is highly characteristic of the parties concerned in it. This curious document, from a young lady of the seven, is as follows:—

“I vow before God, and take the Almighty to witness, that I, Frances Coke, younger daughter of Sir Edward Coke, late Lord Cheife Justice of England, doe give myselfe absolutely to wife, to Henry Vere, Viscount Balboke, Earl of Oxenford, to whom I plight my fayth, and inviolate vows, to keepe myselfe till death us do part; and if ever I break off the least of these, I pray God damme me body and soule in hell fyre in the world to

come. And in thys worlde, I humbly beseech God the earth may open and swallowe me up quicke to the terror of all fayth breakers that remayne alive. In witness thereof, I have written all thys with my owne hand, and sealed yt with my own seale (a hart crowned), which I will ware till you returne to make it good that I have sent you; and for further assurance, I here underneath sett to my name,

“FRANCES COKE,

“in the presence of my deare mother,

“Elizabeth Hatton.

“July 10th, 1617.”⁹⁴

But the meanest actor in this whole affair was Francis Bacon. His jealousy and hatred of Coke impelled him to oppose the marriage; but he made the greatest profession of forwarding it. He wrote on the subject to Buckingham, in these terms:—

“MY VERY GOOD LORD,

Since my last to your lordship I did first send to Mr. Attorney General, and made him know that since I heard from

⁹⁴ Now first published from the State Paper Office. Domestic, July 10, 1617.

court, I was resolved to further the match and conditions thereof, for your Lordship's brother's advancement, the best I could."

He then details his further exertions in the matter; his apprising Lady Hatton and some other special friends that he would in anything declare for the match; his sending Sir John Bulter⁹⁵ to Lady Compton Villiers to tender his good offices; but even whilst he made these overtures and promises his courage flinched from abetting an event which would give such influence to his old enemy, Coke.

"I did ever foresee," he writes, "that this alliance would go near to lose me your lordship, that I hold so dear, and that was the only respect particular to myself that moved me to be as I was, till I heard from you. But I will rely on your constancy and nature, and my own deserving, and the firm tie we have in respect of the King's service."⁹⁶

Well might the writer of this letter complain that Lady Compton Villiers and her son, Sir John, who saw through all his professions, spoke of him with some bitterness and neglect. They

⁹⁵ A kinsman of Buckingham's.

⁹⁶ Nichols, 272.

were, it appeared, under the influence of Sir Edward Coke, and of Secretary Winwood, the latter of whom Bacon “took to be the worst of his enemies. But he resolved “to bear both with Lady Compton Villiers and her son—with her, as a lady ; with her son, as a lover”—and ended by the exclamation : —“God keep us from these long journeys and absences, which make misunderstanding, and give advantage to untruth ; and ever prosper and preserve your lordship !”

Nevertheless, Bacon is supposed to have been the instigator of certain proceedings in the Star Chamber, which were commenced against Sir Edward Coke, for what was called an outrage ; although the carrying his daughter away were an action justifiable by law ; and he quickly showed how earnest was his determination to prevent the match, by another letter to Buckingham. In this he complained of the officious busying himself of Secretary Winwood, and asserted that it was done rather to make a faction than out of any great affection for Buckingham. “It is true,” he adds, “he hath the consent of Sir Edward Coke (as we hear) upon reasonable conditions for your brother, and yet not better than, without question, may be found in some other matches.” He next states the objections to the match.

“First, that Sir John Villiers would marry into

a disgraced house, which in reason of state is never held good.

“Next, he shall marry into a troubled home of man and wife, which in religion and Christian discretion is disliked.

“Thirdly, that he should incur the almost certain loss of friends, myself only excepted, who, out of a pure love and thankfulness, shall be ever firm to you.

“And lastly and chiefly, the danger that would be incurred of lessening Buckingham’s influence with the King.” He therefore recommended Buckingham to signify unto his mother, who seems to have been the main-spring in the affair, that his desire was that the marriage should not be proceeded in without the consent of both parties, thus making use of a plea in order to sound a retreat from the alliance; but all was in vain.

Bacon next addressed himself to the King. He touched him in his weak part. “Your Majesty’s prerogative and authority have risen in some just degrees above the horizon more than heretofore, which has distilled vapours; your judges are in good temper; your justices of peace (which is the great body of the gentlemen of England) grow to be loving and obsequious, and to be weary of this humour of ruffling; all mutinous spirits grow to be a little poor, and to

draw in their horns, and not the less for your Majesty's disauthorising the man I speak of;⁹⁷ now, then, I reasonably doubt that if there be but an opinion of his coming in with the strength of such an alliance, it will give a downward relapse in men's minds unto the former state of things, hardly to be helped, to the great weakening of your Majesty's service. He is by nature unsociable, and by habit unpopular, and too old to take a new place. And men begin already to collect, yea, and to conclude that he that raiseth such a smoke to get in, will set all on fire when he is in.⁹⁸

Not content with these remonstrances, Bacon threatened Winwood with a *Præmunire* for granting the warrant; but he was speedily checked by the indignation of Buckingham, and consequently by that of the King. Coke was reinstated in the favour of the Monarch, and restored to his place in the Privy Council, September 15, 1617. He joined the Court on its journey from Scotland at Woodstock, and "as if he were already on his wings," to use the expression of Sir Henry Yelverton, in his letter to Bacon, "triumphed exceedingly."

⁹⁷ Coke.

⁹⁸ These letters are taken from Mr. Montague's edition of Bacon's works, vol. vii., Bacon's Life, p. 16.

The poor puppet, Frances Hatton, whose inclinations, as Lord Campbell remarks, were as little considered "as if she had been a Queen of Spain under the influence of a Louis Philippe," was now commanded by her mother to write a second letter, consenting to marry one who, in thus espousing her, proved to be most unhappy.

"MADAM,

"I must now humbly desire your patience in giving me leave to declare myself to you, which is, that without your allowance and liking, all the world shall never make me entangle or tie myself. But now, by my father's especial commandment, I obey him in presenting to you my humble duty, in a tedious letter which is to know your ladyship's pleasure, not as a thing I desire, but I resolve to be wholly ruled by my father and yourself, knowing your judgment to be such that I may well rely upon, and hoping that conscience and the natural affection parents bear to children, will let you do nothing but for my good, and that you may receive comfort, I being a mere child, and not understanding the world, nor what is good for myself. That which makes me a little give way to it, is that I hope it will be a means to procure a reconciliation between my

father and your ladyship. Also, I think it will be a means of the King's favour to my father. Himself⁹⁹ is not to be misliked, his fortune is very good, a gentleman well born * * * * So I humbly take my leave, praying that all things may be to every one's contentment,

“Your ladyship's most obedient,

“and humble daughter, for ever,

“FRANCES COKE.

“Dear Mother, — Believe, there has no violent means been used to me by words or deeds.”¹

There now remained nothing but to unite the two young persons whose affairs had become a matter of public interest. Accordingly, they were married on Michaelmas day in the royal chapel at Hampton Court, by the Bishop of Winchester, having been thrice publicly asked in church, the King giving away “Mrs. Frances Coke the bride:” the Queen was present, and Sir Edward Coke brought the bride and bridegroom from his son's house at Kingston, with eight or nine coaches. The consent of Lady Hatton was gained; her daughter protesting that, “although she liked Sir

⁹⁹ Lord Purbeck.

¹ Life of Sir E. Coke, by Lord Campbell.

John Villiers better than any one else, she was resolved to keep a solemn promise made by her to her mother, not to marry without her consent.”²

This marriage, however, did not pacify Lady Hatton’s haughty and vindictive spirit. On the wedding-day, she honoured the event, it is true, by a magnificent entertainment; her husband was not, however, invited, but was seen dining at the public table in the Temple. Their enmity endured for four years without mitigation; at the end of that time, it was subdued by the interference of the King; but was never wholly subdued.

By the alliance with Frances Coke, the Villiers family received considerable accession of wealth; for besides the sum of 10,000*l.* paid in money, Sir Edward and his son, Robert, did, upon the second of November, *pursuant to directions of the Lords of Council*, assure to Sir John Villiers an annuity of 2,000 marks per annum during Sir Edward Coke’s life, and of 900*l.* a year during that of Lady Hatton; besides the manor of Stoke Pogis, in Buckinghamshire, after their deaths: being the moiety of those lands which Sir Edward Coke intended to bequeath to his two daughters. These sums and this estate were

² Bacon’s Relics, ii., 29.

settled by good conveyances, which were certified to his Majesty by Sir Randolph Crewe, Sir Robert Hitcham, and Sir Henry Yelverton, the King's sergeants and attorney; and eventually other possessions, and certain worldly honours, were added to these acquisitions. But the marriage, notwithstanding the success of these arrangements, was attended by misery. The young bride, in spite of her profession at the time of her nuptials, had always secretly hated the husband thus forced upon her choice. She had long given a preference to Sir Robert Howard; and the result was such as to embitter her own existence, and to degrade her into the lowest condition to which a woman can descend; her husband incurring a heavy penalty for his own compliance with the ambitious and mercenary views of Buckingham—that of being wedded to a loathing and, eventually, a faithless wife.

For some years, indeed, a hollow prosperity deceived superficial judges of the affairs of life as to the happiness of this ill-fated pair. A series of magnificent entertainments exalted the favour of Lady Hatton, one of the most odious female characters of that period, and humiliated her husband, who partook not of these festivities. All the great, the gay, the courtly, attended the banquets of this imperious

woman: but her husband was never invited. Hatton House was graced repeatedly by the King, who knighted there several among the guests who were favoured by the lady of the mansion. In the words of an eye-witness, he made "four of her creatures knights,"³ so resolved was he to mollify this virago. This shower of favours was the result entirely of the new connection with the Villiers family; and a marked condescension was shown on that day to the Lady Compton Villiers and her children, whom the King "praised and kissed, and blessed all those that wished them well."⁴

Amid all this carousing, some mistakes—intentional ones, it may be suspected—were committed. The Earl of Pembroke, lord chamberlain, was not invited to the dinner; but, as well as the Earl of Arundel, went home to dine, and returned to wait upon the King—a trait of Lady Hatton's meanness and haughtiness which must have contributed to the disgust felt for her conduct to her husband, "who was neither invited nor spoken of, but dined that day in the Temple as usual."

³ Sir Peter Chapman, that belongs to the Earl of Exeter; Sir Francis Nedham, an old solicitor betwixt her and Sir Christopher Hatton; Sir Nathaniel Neil, a kinsman of Sir Robert; and one Withipole, a kinsman of her own.

⁴ Nichols, iii. 448.

It is but justice to James to state that he now began to entertain a serious intention of endeavouring to reconcile Sir Edward Coke to his lady; but he truly observed that it was a matter of time and difficulty. A cordial reconciliation had, however, taken place between Lady Hatton and her daughter.

Beneath all these forced reconciliations and specious protestations, a deep-seated disease—unsoundness of principle—was latent, only waiting for time and occasion to give it effect. All, indeed, seemed prosperous; in June, 1619, two years afterwards, Sir John Villiers was raised to the dignity of Baron Stoke, in the county of Buckingham, and created Viscount Purbeck,⁵ in the county of Dorset, in spite of much reluctance on the part of Lady Hatton to give him up Purbeck; in case of her refusal, he was to have been styled Viscount Beaumont. It was long, also, before Lady Hatton consented to put Lord Purbeck in possession of Purbeck.⁶ And the honour of being Viscountess of Westmorland was at the same time offered to Lady Hatton, but was refused, “because she would not come up to the price.”⁷

⁵ The Isle of Purbeck belonged to Lady Hatton.

⁶ Calendar of State Papers for 1619, cix., p. 26.

⁷ Biog. Brit. Art. Coke.

This bait was held out in order to induce her to assure to her son-in-law 7,000*l.*, in land, a year, so completely were the King's interests those of the Villiers family. Had she been obstinate, it was determined to make her husband a baron to "spite her."

The termination, however, of this ill-assorted union, thus formed, proves how impossible it is for the most successful match-makers to negotiate for happiness. The affection of Lady Purbeck for Sir Robert Howard had never died away, and it soon showed itself in acts of indiscretion, which gave occasion to much animadversion. In May, 1620, Lord Purbeck went abroad, upon pretext of drinking the waters at Spa, but, according to the account of Camden, to conceal his having "run mad with pride." By another writer, his loss of reason is imputed to the improper support given to his wife in her outrage of public decorum, and consequent insult to his honour. Whatever may have been the cause of his infirmity, it is evident that the manœuvres of his family to increase their wealth and dignity, were by no means conducive to his felicity.⁸

During the whole of this discreditable transaction, and for a considerable time after it had ceased to amuse the court circles, the extraordinary influence of an imperious woman shows at once

⁸ Nichols, iii., 548.

the weakness of James and the incipient degradation of Buckingham. Whether Lady Hatton's influence proceeded from the expectations of further prosperity to the Villiers family, she having 3000*l.* a year in her own power to bequeath, or whether there existed in her any peculiar power to charm, is uncertain. In the inedited State Papers, there are to be found many scattered notices of the great court paid to this arrogant lady.

On the first of November, 1617, writes Mr. Chamberlain to Sir D. Carleton, "the streets being full of people, on account of the Lord Mayor's passage to St. Paul's," the Earl of Buckingham, accompanied by the Marquis of Hamilton, Lord Compton, and the Lord Hay, "Sir Edward Cecil, and I know not whom, many more, to the number of twelve coaches, went to fetch the Lady Hatton from Sir William Craven's, and brought her to her father's, at Cecil House." Here she remained some time, and went in "like state to the Court, and there was much graced by the King, who likewise reconciled her to the Queen, and made, at the same time, an atonement 'twixt her and the Lady Compton, and a perfect peace 'twixt her and her daughter, who would not be persuaded that she could forgive and forget, till, at parting, the King made her swear that she loved her as dearly as ever."

During the course of the same month, another mark of favour was exhibited.⁹

“On Saturday last, Lady Hatton entertained the King at dinner. Sir Edward Coke gave it out it was for the reconciliation of him and his wife; but it seems he mistook the case, for she gave orders that neither he nor any of his sons or servants should enter her doors.” Then follows the contrast, and the poor insulted husband appears on the scene. “His ordinary residence is at the Temple, where very few come unto him, and he sendeth for his diet to Goodman Gibbes, a slovenly cook, in Ram Alley. I believe not that which some confidently report, that he sendeth his shoes to be cobbled, and that on fasting night, when he meant not to feast his men, he sent to his neighbour Gibbes for a breast of mutton.”

Upon the death of Secretary Winwood, Lady Hatton, it was supposed, would have had the nomination of his succession, but the King seized this opportunity of again marking his regard for the favourite.

“They do all apprehend,” writes Mr. Chamberlain, “how much the Lady Hatton might prevail if she would set her whole mind and strength to it; and I think they have and will find means to

⁹ Nov. 14, 1617, Sir Nathaniel Brent to Sir Dudley Carleton. Domestic.

put her in remembrance ; but the voice goes that the place is not like to be disposed of in haste, for the King says he was never so well served as when he was his own secretary, and to that end hath delivered the seals, that were belonging to Sir Ralph Winwood, to the custody of the Earl of Buckingham, and there, perhaps, they shall remain till they both grow weary of them.”¹⁰

Sir Thomas Lake, according to the same correspondent, got possession of the lodging at Court usually assigned to the secretary ; and it was said that he had the seals also, and a warrant for an allowance of 4,100*l.* a year for “intelligence ;” but, adds Mr. Chamberlain, it falls not out so.

Lady Hatton was, it appears, extremely anxious to advance the interests of Sir Thomas Edmondes,¹¹ a desire which was doubtless favoured by Buckingham, to whose interests Edmondes was, at this time, devoted. It is satisfactory to find, in a subsequent letter, that Lady Hatton’s ascendancy did not last long. “That first heat being over,” writes a contemporary, “she may blow her nails twice before it kindle again.” Her aim, as was acknowledged on all hands, “was rather to pull down her husband” than to use her power

¹⁰ Letter from Mr. Chamberlain to Sir D. Carleton, Nov. 8, 1617. Inedited State Papers.

¹¹ See Letter from Nathaniel Brent to Sir D. Carleton.

and favour either for her own good, or her friends.”¹² A singular combination of everything that was violent, and yet intriguing, rapacious, and yet lavish, seems to have been exhibited in the character of this leader of fashion in the Court of James the First.

¹² Inedited Letter in the State Paper Office.

CHAPTER V.

BUCKINGHAM'S FAVOUR PARAMOUNT—CHANGE IN THE KING'S TEMPER—HIS POETIC FLIGHTS—HIS REIGN A COURSE OF DISSIPATION—THE MASQUES OF BEN JONSON—THEIR GREAT BEAUTY—PATRONIZED BY THE QUEEN—HOW PERFORMED—THE VISION OF DELIGHT—COMPOSED TO CELEBRATE BUCKINGHAM'S BEING MADE A MARQUIS—HIS APPEARANCE AT THIS ERA—THE BANQUET GIVEN FOR THIS OCCASION—GREAT EXTRAVAGANCE OF THE ENTERTAINMENT—RIVALS TO BUCKINGHAM IN JAMES'S FAVOUR—SIR HENRY MILD MAY—BROOKE—YOUNG MORISON—THE DIVERSIONS OF THE COURT—THE METEOR THAT APPEARED—FOOT-RACING—BUCKINGHAM'S PROFUSION—JEALOUSIES BETWEEN PRINCE CHARLES AND HIM, 1617-1618-1619.

CHAPTER V.

1617—1618—1619.

BUCKINGHAM may now be said, in the words of Lord Clarendon, "to sleep in the arms of fortune." The King, notwithstanding his failing health, continued his patient sittings in the Star-Chamber, where, groaning under his mortal disease, he found fault with "lawyers' repetitions," and sometimes indulged in petulant eloquence, comparing, when he presided at the trial of Sir Thomas Lake, that disgraced courtier to Adam, Lady Lake to Eve, and their daughter, Lady Roos, to the serpent. Whilst encouraging, on the one hand, a treaty of marriage for his son with a daughter of Spain, and ordering, on the other, musters of troops to be ready to keep down the Papists, who might otherwise be emboldened by that project; he still, throughout the whole of these troublesome and often

urgent affairs, had one object in view—the gratification and aggrandizement of George Villiers. Sometimes we find the King indulging in poetic flights. After a week or two of hard work in the Star-Chamber, James, in a serious mood, wrote a meditation on the Lord's Prayer, and dedicated it to Buckingham.¹³ On a festive occasion, in which the favourite entertained him to his heart's content, the Monarch thought it not beneath him to write a poem and address it also to his young host.¹⁴

The latter part of King James's reign was one perpetual course of what may safely be termed dissipation, but which was then styled "good cheer and jollity." Amongst the most refined of his pleasures were the Masques of Ben Jonson;¹⁵ and the monarch showed his appreciation of the merits of those beautiful productions by a pension of a hundred marks to their author. Hitherto, Daniel had been the Laureate of the Court, having been an especial favourite with Queen Elizabeth and her ladies. Though the appointment had hitherto been unpaid, the slight thus passed on Daniel embittered his declining years, and drove him from the Court, where his talents and virtues were, as he fancied, no longer appreciated.

¹³ State Paper, vol. cv., No. 103.

¹⁴ State Paper.

¹⁵ Life of Ben Jonson, by Gifford, p. 33.

Shakespeare was now in the tomb; and Jonson, who "had hated and feared him through life," was left without a rival to interfere with his triumph, or to commemorate the actions of the great. The death of Prince Henry had saddened the nation and obscured the gaiety of the Court for a season; but now, especially before the marriage of Villiers, whose settling in life was an event cordially desired by James, no revels were carried on without that most popular feature, a Masque; and no masque could gain applause unless Ben Jonson were the writer. A frequent visitor at Belvoir, at Burleigh on the Hill, and at Windsor, when the Court was at either of these places, Jonson never wrote a masque without exhibiting, in strong colours, qualities that astonished his acquaintance. He delighted in the composition of those productions, which, it has been truly said, were unrivalled except by Comus; of the masque, he was, as he himself remarked, "an artificer;" it began with him, and with him it ended. Pageants and masquerades had long been familiar to the English; and masques, improperly so called, had been carried to a great degree of splendour in the reign of Henry VIII., but neither then, as Gifford observes, nor in that of Elizabeth, did the masque acquire "that unity of design, that exclusive character, which it assumed on the reign of James."

That monarch had, in the opinion of the same admirable critic, more literature than taste or elegance. What was deficient in him was, however, apparent in the character of his Queen, Anne of Denmark, who delighted in show and gaiety, loved pomp, and understood it; as Sully expresses it, she “aspired to convert Whitehall into a temple of delight.” She assembled around her the most brilliant leaders of fashion among the nobility; and, not well comprehending our language, she delighted in masques and shows which addressed themselves to the senses. She had, however, sufficient discrimination to applaud the poetical talents of Ben Jonson, whose compositions had delighted her at Althorpe; and she called him to her Court, and engaged him “to embody her conceptions,” soon after her arrival in London.¹⁶

The masque of Ben Jonson consisted of dialogue, singing, and dancing; worked up into one harmonious whole by the introduction of some striking fable, generally borrowed from the Greek or Roman Mythology. The sister arts were employed to bestow the splendours of moveable scenery, hitherto unknown to the stage; for pomp and expense were essential to the masque; “it could only breathe,” as Gifford observes, “in the atmosphere of a Court;” it was composed for princes, and by

¹⁶ Gifford, p. 65.

princes was it performed. The flower of all that was gay and gallant was collected to constitute a band of royal and noble performers ; and perhaps there was never such a display of elegance and beauty as that which graced the masques of Ben Jonson. The songs devolved probably on professional performers, but the dialogues required great care and study to learn them, and skill and practice in their delivery before a courtly and critical audience. The dances were also executed by the Court ; so admirably, that Jonson paid to the exquisite performance of the Measures, as he beheld them, in these lines:—

“ In curious knots and mazes, so
The Spring at first was taught to go ;
And Zephyr, when he came to woo
His Flora, had these notions too ;
And thus did Venus learn to head
Th’ Indian brawls, and so to tread,
As if the wind, not she, did walk,
Nor pressed a flower, nor bow’d a stalk.”

The dialogue in the masques of Ben Jonson is marked by strength and boldness, and the songs are replete with all the luxuriance of the richest fancy. In his dramatic works, and also in his longer poems, there is a compression which produces hardness and severity, but, as Gifford beautifully expresses it, “no sooner has he taken down his lyre, no sooner touched his lighter pieces, than all is changed, as if by magic, and he becomes a

new person. His genius awakes at once, his imagination becomes fertile, ardent, versatile, and exursive; his taste pure and elegant; and all his faculties attuned to liveliness and pleasure.”¹⁷

The masque was therefore one of the highest intellectual delights of an intellectual age. Whilst Jonson composed the dialogues, in which “the soundest moral lessons came recommended by the charm of numbers,” the chief artists of the realm were employed in decorative scenery, the construction of which was at its climax in the time of James. Lawes, and other noted composers, set the songs to music; the masque was the courtly recreation of gallant gentlemen, and ladies of honour, striving to exceed one another in their measures and changes, and in their repasts of wit. Notwithstanding the efforts of Inigo Jones, under whose guidance many of the accompaniments were framed to preserve it, and those of Aurelius Townshend, the masque fell again into the pageant and masquerade after the death of James, and, in spite of an effort made by Charles II. to revive it, ceased to exist.

The “Vision of Delight,” one of the most fanciful and beautiful of Jonson’s masques, was performed on Twelfth Night, and the expenses of the representation were defrayed by Buckingham.

¹⁷ Gifford, p. 67.

It was to celebrate his new dignity as a Marquis, to which James had resolved to elevate him, that the following lines, spoken by Delight, seen afar off, with his attendants, Grace, Love, Harmony, Revel, Sport, Laughter, and followed by Wonder, were composed, and sung in a recitative solo:—

“ Let us play, and dance, and sing,
 Let us now turn every sort
 Of the pleasures of the Spring
 To the graces of a court.
 From air, from cloud, from dreams, from toys,
 To sounds, to sense, to love, to joys ;
 Let your shows be new, as strange,
 Let them oft and sweetly vary,
 Let them haste to their change,
 As the seers may not tarry ;
 Too long to expect the pleasing'st sight,
 Doth take away from the delight.”

The “ Vision ” concluded with a dance of ladies, in which Aurora appeared, and this epilogue followed :—

Aurora. “ I was not wearier when I lay
 By frozen Tithon's side to-night,
 Than I am willing now to stay,
 And be a part of your delight ;
 But I am urged by the day,
 Against my will, to bid you come away.” ¹⁸

At this masque Buckingham acted, and assumed his place as a Marquis, taking, it appears,

¹⁸ Ben Jonson's Works.

a precedence to which he was not entitled. "It is thought strange," Levingston wrote to Carleton, "amongst the old lords that he should take precedence of them."¹⁹

James had never, since his accession, conferred the dignity of Marquis on any of his subjects. He now very hastily gave it to his favourite, ascribing as the reason for this act that he bestowed that "title for the affection he bore him, more than he did to any man," and "for the affection, faith, and modesty that he had found in Buckingham."

A few of the nobility about the Court were hastily summoned to witness the creation, which was by patent, and in private. In the evening great festivities followed, Buckingham presiding as the master of the feast which preceded the masque. His appearance at this era has been delineated by Simon Pass, whose portrait is to be found among the historical collection of prints in the British Museum. He now assumed a deep falling ruff; his doublet was closed with a row of rich pearls, and over it he wore the ribbon of the Garter and the George. A large cloak of rich satin was suspended over one shoulder;—his hands are adorned by a cuff of Vandyck lace. His portrait after this time exhibits two long, very

¹⁹ Calendar of State Papers, vol. cv., 4.

thin wavy curls, suspended from the left ear ; his hair, otherwise, is almost always worn rather short, and turned back from the forehead. The slight moustache of his earlier portraits becomes augmented into one of greater consequence, carefully turned up at each corner ; and a peaked beard environs the chin, which had before a youthful smoothness. He was now matured in form and perfect in deportment.

In unwonted magnificence Buckingham received his royal guest at a banquet long celebrated in the annals of the Court for its exuberance. As yet, the Marquis owned no house sufficiently spacious for this entertainment, and it appears to have been held in Whitehall. How attractive must have been his deportment at this era, before care sat upon his brow, and ill health, vexation of spirit, a consciousness of deserved unpopularity, and a heart sated with unsatisfactory pleasures, had changed into anxiety the eager enjoyment of his dazzling fortunes ! “Carrying his loves and his hatreds in his open forehead,” he presided, careless of the future, full of health and hope, at that noisy and festive board.

The repast on this occasion was served up in the French fashion, under the auspices of Sir Thomas Edmondes, who had recently returned from France. “You may judge,” writes an eye-witness, “of the feast, by this scantling, that there were said to be

seventeen dozens of pheasants and twelve partridges in a dish, throughout which, methinks, were more spoil than largesse.”²⁰ The entertainment, “in spite of many presents,” cost six hundred pounds.

There were some obstacles, even on this day, to Buckingham’s perfect enjoyment. One of these was the uncertain temper of the King. He had now, in the words of those who watched his varying humour, “become so forward and morose, that few things seemed to please him.” The sight of Buckingham alone appeared to appease him; he was, however, greatly delighted with the banquet, and praised “both the meat and the master.” Yet, in spite of this marked preference, and of these abundant honours, there were rumours that Buckingham’s place in the King’s regard was not secure; Sir Henry Mildmay, young Brooke, the son of Lord Cobham, and a son of Sir William Monson’s, began, it was thought, to come into consideration with the King.

The “Vision of Delight” became the chief theme of public discourse. In this masque, Prince Charles was a principal performer; and the other parts were filled up by Buckingham, the Marquis of Hamilton, the Earl of Montgomery, and some other lords. Among the dancers, Isabel,²¹ the

²⁰ Letter from Mr. Chamberlain to Sir D. Carleton. Inedited State Papers, Jan. 10, 1617-18.

²¹ Afterwards the wife of Henry, Lord de la Warr.

eldest daughter of Sir Thomas Edmondes, "bore away the bell." She was, as it were, "hanged all over with jewels;" but, notwithstanding the beauty of the piece, and the rank of the actors, the plot of the "Vision of Delight" is said "to have proved dull." The representation was attended by the Spanish and Venetian ambassadors, to the great affront of the French ambassador; for Buckingham had now planned a deep game, and the apparent frivolity of his pleasures was becoming merely the surface of those political schemes which he had at heart. Soon after these festivities, the King took occasion to affront young Monson, who had been set up by the envious to be an idol in place of Buckingham, by intimating that he did not like his forwardness in presenting himself continually before him. The young man not only took the hint himself, but imparted it to others; so "that all the young Court gallants vanished like mushrooms;" and those who had taken great pains "to set out young Monson to the best advantage, pricking and pranking him up, besides washing his face every day with posset curd, in order that he might rival the handsome Buckingham, received a severe rebuff."²²

Among the favourite diversions of King James was horse-racing. Early in the spring, the Court

²² Inedited State Papers. Domestic. Mr. Chamberlain to Sir D. Carleton, 10 Jan., 1617-18.

was aroused by the racing of two footmen from St. Albans to Clerkenwell; "and many came to pass the time," writes Mr. Chamberlain, merrily, at Newmarket, and the running match ranges all over the country, where they be fit subjects to entertain it, as lately they have been at Sir John Croft's, near Bury, and in requital, those ladies have invited them to a mask of their own invention (all those fair sisters being summoned for the purpose), so that on Thursday the King, Prince, and Court go thither a shroving."²³

The following extract from one of Mr. Chamberlain's letters represents another kind of diversion:—"The King came hither the Saturday before Shrovetide, and the two days following there was much feasting and jollity; and the Christmas mask repeated on Shrove Tuesday night. On Saturday last, the Prince made a ball and a banquet at Denmark House, which he had lost at Tennis to the Marquis of Buckingham,²⁴ who invited thither a number of ladies, mistresses, and valentines, a ceremony come lately in request, and grown so costly that it is said he hath cast away this year 2000*l.* that way, among whom a daughter of Sir John Croft's

²³ Inedited State Papers. It is dated, London, March 11, 1619-20.

²⁴ Inedited State Papers, Feb. 26, 1619-20.

that is unmarried, had a carcanet of 800*l.* for her share; and the King is so pleased with the whole society of those sisters,²⁵ that he extols them before all others, and hath bespoken them for the Court against next Christmas. The banquet at Denmark House was so plentiful that it cost 400*l.*, and all the women came away, as it were, laden with sweetmeats; but supper there was none, save what the Lord of Purbeck made to his private friends.”²⁶

Another of those aspirants to royal favour, to whom we have referred, and whom the career of Buckingham drew forth from obscurity, was Sir Henry Mildmay, and a son of George Brooke's, who had been executed at Winchester, on the supposed Raleigh plot. But James soon discovered that both these young courtiers were the tools of factions directed against Buckingham; and they were banished the Court. Some time afterwards, it was thought that the return of young Monson might be effected through the influence of his friends; but, observes a bystander of this game, these Court resolutions do strangely alter, and for the most part, “the day following gives the lie to that which preceded.”

²⁵ Sir J. Croft's Daughters.

²⁶ N. Brent to Sir D. Carleton, March 30, 1618. State Paper Office, inedited.

The King, meantime, continued to amuse himself vastly at Newmarket. The following description of one of his days of pleasure presents a singular picture of the homely diversions of the first of the Stuart monarchs that reigned in this country :—

“We hear nothing from Newmarket, but that they devise all the means they can to make themselves merry, as of late there was a feast appointed at a farm-house not far off, where every man should bring his dish. The King brought a great chine of beef; the Marquis of Hamilton four pigs, garnished with sausages; the Earl of Southampton two turkies; another, some partridges; and one, a whole tray full of buttered eggs: and so all passed very pleasantly.”²⁷

During these diversions, James’s good humour, often interrupted by disease and self-indulgence, was maintained by his partiality for Buckingham. “The King,” writes Mr. Chamberlain, “is never out of tune, but that the sight of the Earl of Buckingham doth settle and quiet all.”

Meantime, one of those meteoric appearances to which the superstition of the day attached some portentous meaning, excited popular alarm, and suspended even the course of public business.

²⁷ Mr. Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton, Nov. 28, 1618. State Paper Office, inedited.

“On Wednesday,” writes one of the functionaries of government, “we had no Star Chamber, by reason of the Lord Chancellor’s indisposition; that was the first day we took notice here of the great blazing star, though it was observed at Oxford a full week before. It is now the only subject of discourse, and not so much as little children, but as they go to school, talk in the streets that it foreshows the death of a king or a queen, or some great war towards.”²⁸

At another time a race of two footmen from St. Albans to Clerkenwell diverted the Court. Many money bets were laid upon the result, and Buckingham won three thousand pounds upon that day. “The story,” as the narrator of it well observes, “were not worth telling, but that you may see we have little to do when we are so far affected with these trifles, that all the Court in a manner, lords and ladies, and some further off, and some nearer, went to see this race, and the King himself almost as far as Barnet; and though the weather was sour and foul, yet he was scant *fi ls de bonne mère* that went not out to see, inso-much that it is verily thought there was as many people as at the King’s first coming to London; and for the courtiers on horseback,

²⁸ T. Locke to Sir Dudley Carleton, Nov. 17, 1618, State Paper Office, inedited.

they were so pitifully bewrayed and bedaubed all over, that they could scant be known one from another, besides divers of them came to have falls and other mishaps, by reason of the multitude of horses."

On some of these occasions, the lavish disposition of Buckingham was exhibited. On St. George's Day, a festival observed with much solemnity, he presented forty of his gentlemen with fifty pounds a piece "to provide themselves," and twenty to ten of his yeomen, besides a hundred pounds to treat them with a supper and a play on the following night at the Mitre in Fleet Street. A retinue of fifty persons appears, in modern days, a tolerable attendance for a nobleman even of high rank; but it had recently been found necessary to limit them to that number, owing to the unbounded ostentation and extravagance of many of the nobility.²⁹

Whilst this continued round of pleasures was carried on, some adverse events checked the merriment of those who played a part in the revels. Prince Charles, who was his mother's favourite, was sometimes the object of his father's jealousy, although, by the gentleness and prudence of his deportment, he had avoided the almost open state of variance with the King, which, in his bro-

²⁹ Nichols, vol. iii., p. 477.

ther's days, had divided the Court into two parties. Still there were occasions on which the conduct of the young Prince was misrepresented.

The difference was soon reconciled; and "my Lord of Buckingham," as he was called by several annalists of the day, gave a dinner to the King and Queen for the express purpose of reconciling his Highness to his royal father. The King and Queen dined at a separate table, but in the same room as that in which the lords and ladies were feasted: among these, Lady Hatton, Lady Villiers Compton, and Lady Fielding, and several others of the same family, were placed; the King drank to all these separately, and sent them secret messages. At the close of the banquet, he rose, and drank a common health to all the noble family, and declared that he desired them to advance them before all others. "And because," adds the writer of the letter in which this account is given of himself, "there was no doubt—for, said he, 'I live to that end;' be assured we live in their posterity's name, that they would so far regard their father's commandments and instructions as to advance that house above all others whatsoever." ³⁰

The King shortly afterwards verified his as-

³⁰ Nichols, 484, from Birch's MSS. British Museum.

sertion by creating Lady Villiers Compton, by patent, Countess of Buckingham in her own right for life. The Heralds, it is said, were "posed" to explain how Sir Thomas Compton, himself of a noble and loyal family, should have no part in this patent; but the public could easily comprehend that it was the aim and intention of James to elevate the Villiers family by every mark of especial favour. The newly-made Countess of Buckingham, thus raised by fortune from a low estate, did not escape calumny; rumours, both scandalous and unjust, being set afloat regarding her imputed intimacy with Lord Keeper Williams, who succeeded Bacon on the woosack.³¹

Another melancholy event saddened all hearts, and excited a deep and generous resentment. This was the death of Sir Walter Raleigh. In this event, "the sacrifice," as Hume expresses it, "of the only man in the nation who had a high reputation for valour and military experience," Buckingham had no doubt some indirect participation. He promoted it, because he promoted the projected alliance with Spain, which had now, for some years, lain the closest at the King's heart. He was responsible for it, because no intercession that he might have chosen to make for the "gallantest worthie that

³¹ Life of B. Goodman, p. 286.

England ever bred," would have been proffered in vain. During the early part of his career, Buckingham had, indeed, befriended Raleigh; but little credit is to be assigned for the mediation which, in 1615, had procured the release of the illustrious prisoner, after twelve years of durance, since it was purchased, through the agency of Lady Villiers, for fifteen hundred pounds. On that occasion, Raleigh had addressed a letter of thanks to the all-powerful favourite; but now affairs had undergone a marvellous change. Even money could not avail, and Buckingham, in all the sunshine of his fortunes, stood at all events indifferent, if not accessory, to the infamous sentence, by the revival of which Raleigh was doomed to death.

The fashion of the day, as well as the wishes of the King, all tended at this time to increase the ascendancy of Spanish counsels in England. James entertained an opinion, peculiar to himself, that any marriage, except with a daughter of France or Spain, would be unworthy of the Prince of Wales, and he would never suffer a princess of any other royal house to be mentioned in his presence as a suitable consort for the heir apparent.³² Upon the death of Prince Henry, a negotiation for a marriage between the Prince

³² Hume. Life of James I.

Charles and the second daughter of France, the Princess Christine, was set on foot, but failed, owing to the death of the Count de Soissons, its chief promoter.³³ The efforts of the Spanish ambassador, the famous Gondomar, and the long course of intrigues which attended his visitation to England, afterwards effectually set aside for a time all thoughts of prosecuting the scheme of a marriage treaty with either of the French princesses, on the one hand; whilst, on the other, the affairs of Germany were such as to discourage, to all appearance, the exertions which were made by the Spanish party in England to produce a union between the royal families of Great Britain and Spain. Frederic, the Elector, and son-in-law of James, had accepted the tender of the crown of Bohemia, and become, consequently, involved in hostilities with Austria, and these were regarded as a religious war; for Austria, which, throughout her dominions, had always made religion a pretext for her usurpations, now upheld the Catholic faith as her object, whilst the Elector Palatine, a Protestant, ranged himself on the side of liberty. The whole of the English nation were eager to espouse the cause, and to aid the brave exertions of that prince. Sincerely

³³ Birch's *Negotiations between England, France, and Brussels*, p. 372.

attached to the Princess Palatine, the ill-fated Elizabeth of Bohemia, they considered her interests, and those of her husband, as constituting a sort of crusade, and they were ready to risk plunging the country into all "the chaos of German politics," considering the contest as between Protestantism and liberty—and Popery and despotism.

On the first introduction of Gondomar to the King, an accident had occurred which was regarded by many as a presage.³⁴ As the ambassador was passing from the Council Chamber, along the terrace towards the Great Chamber in Whitehall, a piece of the floor sank, and several persons fell down. The Earl of Arundel hurt his face; the Lord Gerrard and Lord Gray also received some injury from the fall; the ambassador alone escaped, being held up by two of the household guards. This accident seemed ominous of the ultimate rupture between England and Spain; James regarded it in that light, and could never bear to hear it mentioned!

Unwonted honours were indeed shown to Gondomar. He was received with marks of great distinction, and lodged at Ely House, which had been prepared for his use with considerable expense. But the most important de-

³⁴ Inedited State Papers, March 20, 1619-20.

violation from established custom was the appropriation of a cloth of state to this ambassador, an appendage never permitted to any such personage before. That mark of favour, however, which gave the greatest offence to the Puritan party, was the order that the chapel should be renewed and embellished, and an altar placed in it. All the ambassador's expenses of living were defrayed by the King; although, on being offered some of the royal attendants, Gondomar declined their services. Whilst these things were going on at Court, the populace, cherishing the cause of the distant and deserted daughter of James, Elizabeth of Bohemia, were parading the streets with drums beating, to muster recruits for the Palatinate.³⁵

But James was under the influence of Gondomar, and Spain was connected by the closest ties of blood, and by the still dearer bonds of political interest, with the Emperor of Austria. Gondomar well understood the King, and divined his wishes. He offered, at this juncture, the second daughter of the King of Spain to Prince Charles, and backed his proposal by the promise of an immense sum of money, which he well knew would be acceptable in the present needy circumstances of the British King. The proposal,

³⁵ Inedited State Papers for 1619-20.

though entertained by James, was distrusted by the public, and deemed wholly insincere, for it was thought that Spain had no intention of forming any union with a princess of heretical principles.

The fate of Sir Walter Raleigh was therefore sealed. Twenty-three years before, he had acquired for the crown of England a claim to the continent of Guiana; and, in his second expedition, had planned, and executed through his son Walter, the sacking of St. Thomas, a small town which the Spaniards, not acknowledging the British claim to the territory of Guiana, had built on the river Oronooko. The young Walter Raleigh was killed in that attempt. He was a young man more desirous of honour than safety; "with whom," said the agonized father, on hearing of his loss, "to say truth, all the respects of this world have taken end in me."³⁶

Raleigh was now to suffer for the results of an enterprise which he had undertaken with the express consent of the King.³⁷ Whilst proceedings were carried on against him, Gondomar was entertained, as it will be remembered, with a marked distinction by Buckingham. The extreme youth of the favourite had indeed attracted the witticisms of the artful

³⁶ Letter to Winwood.

³⁷ Hume. Reign of James I.

Spaniard, who had converted that circumstance into a compliment to the King's penetration, telling his Majesty "that he was the wisest and happiest prince in Christendom, to make privy-counsellors sage at the age of twenty-one, when his master, the King of Spain, could not do it when they were sixty."³⁸ The wily Spaniard dealt out his phrases in points and conceits, a sort of discourse then well received in society, and peculiarly agreeable to the King. He affected, also, to speak false Latin. The King laughed at him, on which the Ambassador rejoined, "Your Majesty speaks like a pedant, but I speak like a gentleman," and James gloried in his acknowledged superiority in the classics. By these small contrivances had Gondomar insinuated himself into royal favour, so that no boon that he could ask—not even the life of the venerated Raleigh—could be refused.

There was another wheel within this closely-contrived political machine. The Countess of Buckingham was inclined to Popery; and became, eventually, a convert to that faith. This circumstance naturally influenced greatly the son, over whose counsels the Countess continued to hold a sway, and to dispose them to the marriage of the heir apparent to a Catholic.

³⁸ Oldmixon. History of the House of Stuart, p. 52.

Some time previously, when the affair of the marriage was first broached, the sentiments of the Marquis and his mother were, therefore, generally understood to be favourable, and the Lord Treasurer Cranfield, at that time, under their influence, was zealous in a cause so acceptable to the favourite.

In February, 1617, Nathaniel Brent wrote to Sir Dudley Carleton: "By the Marquis of Buckingham and his mother the Spanish match is much apprehended, though methinks there needs no such haste, the lady being yet scant eleven years old. In the meantime every man hopes or fears as he is affected, and they say the Lord Treasurer is so far possessed, that, like another Cato, that began to learn Greek at threescore years old, he hath got him a Spanish reader, and applies it hard." The influence of the Countess of Buckingham doubtless, therefore, turned the scale against Raleigh, to the vexation of her son's best friends. "She was," writes Bishop Hacket, who knew her well, "mother to the great favourite, but, in religion, became a step-mother. She doated upon him extremely, as the glory of her womb, yet, by turning her coat so wantonly when the eyes of all the kingdom were upon her, she could not have wrought him a worse turn if she had studied a mischief against him." "Many," adds the same

writer, " marvelled what rumbled in her conscience all that time ; for, from a maid to a maiden, she had not every one's good words for practice of piety." ³⁹ " Arthur Wilson complains also that the Countess of Buckingham was the cynosure that all the Papists steered by ; but that it was above her ability to bear the weight of that metaphor."

" The Countess was," he adds, " a protectress of the Jesuits and Jesuitesses, the females of that order, of whom there were no fewer in England than two hundred English ladies of good families." Her opinions were well known to affect her son, who now began to be accused by the Puritans of Arminianism, and became the friend and patron of Archbishop Laud. Gondomar saw well to what point to direct his insidious game. The Countess had a share in the management of State affairs ; she, with her son, guided the helm, and as much court was paid to her as to Buckingham, whilst both received far more adulation than was thought necessary to bestow on the King himself. Wittily, though somewhat impiously, Gondomar wrote to the Spanish Court that " there never was more hope of the conversion of England than now ; for there are more prayers and oblations offered here to the mother than to the son." ⁴⁰

³⁹ Hacket's Life of Archbishop Williams, vol. i., p. 171.

⁴⁰ Oldmixon, p. 52.

Under this complication of interests, Raleigh, on the 24th of October, 1618, was given to understand that it was the King's intent that he should be put to death, and that he should therefore prepare himself for the same.⁴¹ Between that intimation and the fulfilment of his doom, the courage of the broken-spirited and diseased prisoner, prematurely old with sorrow and disappointment, gave way. He sought to anticipate his fate, and attempted suicide, but the wound which he gave himself by stabbing—a cut, rather than a stab—was not fatal, and he recovered to address to his disconsolate wife one of the most eloquent and heart-rending letters that ever emanated from that tomb of the living in which he passed the close of his days.⁴² How Buckingham

⁴¹ Nichols, iii., p. 493.

⁴² It begins thus:—"Receive from thy unfortunate husband these, his last lines; these, the last words that ever thou shalt receive from him. That I can live, and think never to see you and my child more, I cannot. I have desired God, and disputed with my reason, but nature and compassion hath the victory. That I can live to think how you are both left a spoil to my enemies, and that my name shall be a dishonour to my child, I cannot—I cannot endure the memory thereof. Unfortunate woman! unfortunate child! comfort yourselves, trust God, and be contented with your poor estate; I would have bettered it, if I had enjoyed it a few years."—Bishop Goodman, ii., p. 93. Mr. Brewer has, by the discovery of this letter, in the College of All Souls,

could hear of this last act of a mind almost frenzied with misery, of a being, to use Raleigh's own words, "not tempted with Satan," but only "tempted with sorrow, whose sharp teeth devour my heart," and not plead for this ornament of his age, it is scarcely possible to conceive. He would have culled golden opinions for such an interference; he would have established a source of proud and consolatory recollections for his own heart; but he lost that glorious opportunity, and left the illustrious prisoner, to use his own words, to be a "wonder and a spectacle," and went on in his own perilous career, until the hour of retribution, even to him, arrived.

Raleigh's execution was fixed to take place—so conscious was Government of the odium which it would incur—on the Lord Mayor's Day, "that the pageants and fine shows might," as Aubrey expresses it, "avocate and draw away the people from beholding the tragedie of the gallantest worthie that England ever bred."⁴³

On the twenty-third of October, a discussion took

Oxford, definitively settled the question whether Raleigh did or did not attempt his life in the Tower. Raleigh's list of his debts, and his beseeching his wife "to take care of them," are not among the least affecting parts of his letter.

⁴³ Nichols, p. 493.

place in the Privy Council as to the mode in which prisoners who had been condemned for treason, and set at liberty, could be executed. The subject was one of much perplexity, but everything that was subservient and expedient could be accomplished in those days. It was, however, determined to send a Privy Seal to the judges on the King's Bench, desiring them to try Sir Walter Raleigh "according to law." The death to which he was doomed, by the hand of the executioner, was already impending over the illustrious prisoner in the form of disease. He had sent to the merciless Cecil his mournful manifesto of privation and sickness; his left side was numbed, his fingers on the same side were beginning to be contracted, his tongue and speech affected; he spoke feebly, and feared he might altogether lose the power of utterance. An application had therefore been made for his removal from his damp, cold lodging in the Tower, to a little room in the garden, which he had himself built, close to his laboratory, or, as it was styled, his stilhouse.⁴⁴

But the time was at hand when his spirit should breathe in a freer atmosphere; and all that man could do to him should cease to be of a source of dread. "The world," he calmly ob-

⁴⁴ Letter in the State Paper Office, no date. See *Life of Sir Walter Raleigh*, by the author. Appendix, p. 395.

served, "was but a large prison, out of which some were daily selected for execution."

On the twenty-eighth of October, he was tried, and of course, condemned, in the King's Bench. Henry Yelverton, then attorney-general, could not help again, in his address for the Crown, describing the prisoner as one who, for his parts and quality, was to be pitied; "one who had been a star, yea, and of such nature, that shineth far; but out of the necessity of state, like stars when they trouble the sphere, must indeed fall." It is remarkable that Yelverton, who had been patronised by Somerset, did himself, in after days, fall, having incurred the enmity of Villiers.

The King, and of course Buckingham, were at this time in Hertfordshire, on the Royal progress, which was always a scene of festivity and amusement. The warrant for Raleigh's execution was, however, produced directly after the sentence had been passed, dated the same day, signed, and addressed to Lord Bacon. The sentence was commuted from hanging to beheading; but no other favour was granted. James and his courtiers feared the effect of public indignation; no time, therefore, was allowed; on the day after his sentence, Raleigh met his death with simple, decorous tranquillity; as one who was going to take a long journey, for which he was well prepared.

The streets were then thronged with the gay followers of the annual pageantry; and, amid the din of trumpets, and shouts of the people, the noble spirit of Raleigh passed to a better world. Perhaps, had he sued for life to Gondomar, as his friend Lord Clare recommended, the boon might have been granted. But those who loved his memory had not this act of humiliation to recall, as casting one shadow over the brightness of his departure from among them. "I am neither so old, nor so infirm," was his reply, when urged to make this appeal to the Spaniard, "but that I should be content to live; and, therefore, this would I do, were I sure it would do my business; but if it fail, then I shall lose both my life and my honour; and both those I will not part with."⁴⁵

Since it was understood that Raleigh's death was a sacrifice to Spanish councils, owing to a disputed territory, there can be no doubt but that this event embittered the minds of the public against the cherished schemes which James and Villiers had for some time conceived with regard to the Spanish alliance. Whilst all bore a smiling aspect, various sources of discontent were ready to break forth; and it was generally reported that James had, to his infinite disgrace, somewhat

⁴⁵ Oldys's *Life of Raleigh*, folio viii., p. 729.

insisted on the sentence of hanging being put into execution, and that he could with difficulty be brought to consent to its being commuted.⁴⁶

One circumstance which somewhat disturbed the minds of the Court revellers, yet seemed not to lessen the number of the revels, was the fatal illness of the Queen. At the Christmas of 1618-19, the physicians began to speak doubtfully, and the courtiers to plot for leases for her lands, for the keeping of Somerset House, and for a division of the spoil of her furniture and personalities, whenever her death should take place, so confidently was it expected. Meantime, the festivities of the season went on as usual, Hatton House being the centre of all that was gay and great, and the lady of the mansion the deepest of domestic politicians. During the Christmas she gave a grand supper, with a play, and invited all the gallants and great ladies about the Court to grace it; but the Howards, especially, were solicited and caressed, for it was Lady Hatton's aim to "solder and link them fast again" with the Marquis of Buckingham; and to see if he would cast an eye towards Diana Cecil,⁴⁷ the second daughter of William, second Earl of Salisbury. This young lady was made, in order to attract the

⁴⁶ State Papers. Domestic. 1618-19.

⁴⁷ Her mother was a Howard—the sister of the infamous Lady Somerset.

greater notice, Mistress of the Feast; but the bait proved unsuccessful. Many, doubtless, were the parents who were not unwilling to match even the fairest of their daughters with the young Marquis, "for it is like," writes Mr. Chamberlain, "there will be much angling after it, now it is decided the King wishes him to take a wife, which of divers is diversely constructed."⁴⁸

Twelfth Night was celebrated with a masque, in which Prince Charles, Buckingham, and several young noblemen and gentlemen, to the number of twelve—amongst whom young Maynard "bore away the bell" for dancing—enacted. This masque was one of Ben Jonson's compositions; but whether it was the "Vision of Delight" repeated, or "Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue," is not determined.⁴⁹ Six days afterwards, the Banqueting House at Whitehall, in which these revels had taken place, was burned down, owing, it was supposed, to the neglect of women who were appointed to sweep the room, and who held their candles too near to some of the oiled cloths and devices for the masque, which had been left by the King's orders to be ready for Shrove Tuesday.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Nichols, iii., 521.

⁴⁹ Bishop Goodman's Letters, ii., 188

⁵⁰ The fire happened in the day time, at eleven, and

The Queen had been some time ill, but hopes were entertained of her recovery until within a very short period of her death. When the danger increased, Dr. Mayerne, according to a promise he had given her, told her, twenty-four hours before her decease, that she could not recover. It was then too late for the Queen to make a will; but she wished to leave all that she possessed, with the exception of a jewel to the King of Denmark, and a casket to the Princess Elizabeth, to her son Charles, adding an assurance that her faith was free from Popery. Although, when asked if she wished to leave all she had to her son, she answered, and had again, "Yes," her possessions were so valuable, that the people about the Court did not expect that her wishes would be followed out without the usual formalities. Meantime, whilst her body lay at Denmark House, her funeral was delayed, because the Master of the Wardrobe would not pay double prices, usually then charged when ready money could not be produced. Crowds thronged lasted only an hour. Lord Chancellor Bacon was among those high personages who by his presence attempted to ensure order; but there was much spoliation even in the face of day. The hall was re-erected three years afterwards. This ancient building might, it is thought, have been saved; but two men, who saw the flames break out, went away for fear of being blamed.

round Denmark House; and far more curiosity was expressed to see her after her death than had ever been testified during her life. The ladies were weary of waiting till the money could be raised to carry to the grave one who had left 400,000*l.* in jewels, 90,000*l.* in plate, 80,000 Jacobuses in ready money, besides a costly wardrobe.⁵¹ "The will," says the precise Mr. Chamberlain, in a letter to Sir Dudley Carleton, "proves to be nothing."⁵² The King, meantime, was dangerously ill, of an agonising disease, and obliged to be carried part of the way to Theobalds in a Neapolitan portative chair, given him by Lady Hatton; weak as he was, and even whilst the Queen was unburied, he would have his deer brought before him, that he might enjoy his wonted pleasures. The lady mourners were, meantime, quarrelling by the funeral bier for precedency at the approaching ceremonial; and, amongst the foremost of the combatants was the Countess of Nottingham, who claimed, as one of the two conditions of Nottingham's giving up the post of Lord High Admiral, that he should be the first Earl of England, and that she, as first Countess, should step out before all others on this occasion. The expenses of the funeral were to exceed those

⁵¹ State Papers. Calendar, vol. cvii., No. 7.

⁵² Ibid, 52.

of Queen Elizabeth's, although money was so scarce, that some of Queen Anne's plate would have to be coined three times to pay them. There was not even money to put the King's and Prince's servants in mourning; and, though Anne died on the twenty-first of March, the twenty-seventh of March found her still in ghastly state at Denmark House.⁵³ At length, on the fourteenth of May, the corpse, with Prince Charles riding before it, was carried to its resting place. The chariot and six horses, on which the Queen's effigy was placed, and the hearse itself, were very stately, yet the funeral was pronounced to be a "poor, drawling sight." Two hundred and fifty indigent women followed the hearse. The Countess of Arundel claimed and obtained her privilege to follow as first Countess; whilst Buckingham's place, as pall-bearer, was supplied by the Earl of Rutland.

The Queen's death took away all chance of that counter-influence which it is possible that Anne might have sought to exercise when the conduct of Buckingham became, as it eventually did, oppressive and overbearing. It left, also, her son, whose affectionate nature had found a return in his mother's partiality for him, dependent wholly upon Buckingham as a mediator

⁵³ State Papers, vol. cviii., No. 85. Calendar.

with his father. Shortly afterwards, one of the effects of this state of affairs was exhibited. The King, upon the Prince's suit, granted the Marquis of Buckingham an estate of twelve hundred a year, that had belonged to the Queen; and to requite this service, Buckingham sued the King for an addition of 5,000*l.* a year to the Prince's former allowance, which was also granted. It appears, however, that the estate assigned to Buckingham was given, ostensibly, for the care which the favourite had bestowed on His Majesty during a severe illness which had followed closely upon the death of Queen Anne.⁵⁴

Hitherto, the young favourite had proved himself possessed of no higher qualities than those which a courtier's life requires. He was now placed in a situation which drew forth abilities of which his enemies and his friends were alike ignorant. On the thirtieth day of January, 1618-19, Buckingham was created Lord High Admiral; a post which he at first refused to accept on account of his youth and inexperience. James would, however, admit of no excuse, and the aged Earl of Nottingham resigned that pre-eminent place, alleging as a reason, his advanced years, but, actually, for a "consideration." According to one authority, the compensation was a pension of six hundred a

⁵⁴ Nichols, iii., 546.

year to his lady, of five hundred to his son, Charles Howard, and of two hundred and fifty to his daughter, to commence from the death of the Earl; or, as another statement gives it, the compact was made for certain benefits; namely, "a good round sum of ready money, and 3,000*l.* yearly pension during the Earl's life; and after his decease, 1,000*l.* pension to his lady, and 500*l.* a year to his eldest son by her, which was to be doubled to him at his mother's death."⁵⁵

The office of High Admiral was enjoyed by Buckingham to the close of his short life; and was maintained by energy such as had not been witnessed in the administration of naval affairs since the days of Queen Elizabeth. Little credit has been assigned to him hitherto by historians for his unwearied endeavours, not only to restore, but actually to create a navy; but the recent discoveries in the State Paper Office place his merits in this important sphere beyond dispute, as will hereafter be shown.⁵⁶

He served, indeed, a master, whose confidence in him, based, perhaps, on more solid grounds than have been allowed, it was no easy task to disturb.

⁵⁵ Letter from Sir Edward Harwood to Sir Dudley Carleton. State Paper Office. Domestic, 1618-19.

⁵⁶ Birch's MSS., British Museum, 4173. Letter of Oct. 3, 1618.

Buckingham would have acted wisely, had he, at this most critical period of his life, remembered the counsels given by Bacon in his famous "Letter to Sir George Villiers." "You are as a new risen star, and the eyes of all men are upon you; let not your own negligence make you fall like a meteor." But his youth, his sudden rise to fortune, his mother's influence, and his own desire to elevate his family—an aim which militated against disinterested conduct—all contributed to smother the naturally generous impulses of his heart.

The King's partiality was manifested both publicly and privately. Buckingham had been his attendant in illness; he was now his consoler in affliction; for the King was not insensible to the loss of a wife to whom, in spite of "some matrimonial wrangling,"⁵⁷ he had been an indulgent husband. Accordingly, when the funeral made for the Queen took place, Buckingham remained at Theobalds with his royal master.⁵⁸ His great object appears, at this period of his career, to have been the aggrandisement of his family. He had secured the prosperity of his elder brother, Sir John Villiers, by his marriage with the daughter of Sir Edward Coke;

⁵⁷ Miss Strickland's *Life of Anne of Denmark*.

⁵⁸ Nichols, iii. 539.

he now determined to effect that of his youngest brother, Sir Christopher Villiers, not by marrying him to the niece of a rich alderman, but by other methods. Already had he availed himself of his empire over the actions of Bacon,⁵⁹ to procure for his relatives one of those profitable sinecures which abounded in that reign. This was a monopoly for the licensing of ale houses, which Buckingham desired to engross, conjointly with Mr. Patrick Maule, for his brother. But there was an impediment—the monopoly had been deemed a grievance, and in 1617, Bacon had replied to Buckingham's application for it in the following terms:—

“I have conferred with my Lord Chief Justice and Mr. Solicitor thereupon, and there is a scruple in it that it should be one of the grievances put down in Parliament; which, if it be, I may not, in my duty and love to you, advise you to deal in it; if it be not, I will mould in the best manner and help it forward.”⁶⁰ In a subsequent letter, three years afterwards, Bacon again discourages the continued solicitude expressed by Buckingham for the patent; for, in alluding to the patents “as like to be stirred in the lower house of parliament,” he mentions

⁵⁹ Made Chancellor on the 4th of January, 1617.

⁶⁰ Bacon's Works, vol. ii., p 201, note.

among them that of the ale houses; and recommending, through the "singular love and affection he bore to Buckingham," that his Lordship, "whom God hath made in all things so fit to be beloved, would put off the envy of these things," which, according to Bacon's judgment, "would bear no great fruit, and rather take the means for ceasing them, than the note for maintaining them." ⁶¹

It was probably, on finding his first application, though assisted by his mother, useless, that Buckingham contrived a match between Sir Sebastian Harvey's ⁶² only daughter and Sir Christopher Villiers. "The match," writes Mr. Chamberlain, "being not to the joy of the poor father, so much against the old man's stomach, as the conceit thereof hath brought him near his grave already, if at least the world mistake not the true cause of his sickness." ⁶³

The marriage was urged on, nevertheless, by the Countess of Buckingham, who found, however, that Sir Sebastian, then the Lord Mayor, a wilful and dogged man, could not by any means, either foul or fair, be brought to yield; in the agony of his spirit, the old man wished himself and his

⁶¹ Bacon's Works, p. 225.

⁶² The Lord Mayor.

⁶³ Nichols, 548.

daughter dead, rather than be compelled to comply. The truth is, the young lady was only in her fourteenth year, and very small in stature, and her father did not wish her to be married until four or five years afterwards. He was, nevertheless, incessantly annoyed with messages from the King; and these he took so much to heart that he was brought to death's door, although Buckingham and others were sent to comfort him. The Lord Mayor and aldermen had not been present at the Queen's funeral; and the King, wishing to please Harvey, and to atone for this apparent insult, ordered that St. Paul's Cross should mourn on Trinity Sunday, and that the Mayor and Corporation should go there as mourners; but Harvey, "sick and surfeited, declined attendance; nor, when his Majesty, on the fifth of June, made his triumphant entry into London, was he well enough to receive him. In truth, the honest pride of Englishmen began to revolt against having the relatives of the favourite forced upon them as sons-in-law. The King, however, entered in state, attended by Prince Charles and all the nobility—Buckingham, of course, a conspicuous object amid the throng. James, on this melancholy occasion, looked "more like a wooer than a mourner." He had already laid aside his weeds for Queen Anne. A fresh suit of "watchet satin, laid with a blue

and white feather," rejoiced the eyes of the company, who were glad to see him so gallant; and ill accorded with the expected appearance of an embassy of condolence from the Duc de Lorraine, with two or three thousand persons all in deep mourning.⁶⁴ And when it was remembered that the King had, not long ago, formally recommended, as on his death-bed, his son, his favourite, and Lord Digby—who had suffered, he said, in popularity, for the Spanish match—to his council, and had expected his decease shortly, there was something almost ludicrous in the contrast.

The desired match did not, however, prosper, notwithstanding a visit from James to the Lord Mayor's own residence, soon afterwards, to expostulate with the old man. He also sent for Sir Sebastian, his wife, and daughter, from their dinner, in Merchant Taylor's Hall, in order to recommend Sir Christopher as a suitor; but all was in vain, Buckingham was defeated, and the young lady was eventually united to the eldest son of Sir Francis Popham.⁶⁵

Disappointed in this matter, Buckingham now manifested his intentions of improving his own fortunes by a successful marriage; various objects of attraction had been offered to his gaze, but they wanted, probably, that which his ex-

⁶⁴ State Papers, vol. cix; No. 76. Calendars.

⁶⁵ Nichols, vol., iii. p. 556.

travagance rendered essential — fortune. On one occasion, we find him, with the King, visiting a house in order to admire the beauty of one of his god-daughters, but no result followed. The world, too, now talked loudly of the marriage of Lady Diana Cecil with the Earl of Oxford, whilst a richer bride was given, by common report, to Buckingham. This was the Lady Katherine Manners, the only daughter of Francis, sixth Earl of Rutland, a nobleman of great wealth; the lady was also endowed with other attractions besides fortune, proving a woman of many attainments and great spirit.

This marriage was, in every respect, desirable. It produced, amongst one of its advantages, an alliance in blood with the illustrious Sydneys. Roger, fifth Earl of Rutland, the brother of Earl Francis, having married Sir Philip Sydney's daughter and heiress.⁶⁶ It cemented a union with a house already favoured by King James, who visited Belvoir Castle repeatedly, and who had constituted its two last lords successively Chief Justices in Eyre of all his forests and chases north of the Trent, beside conferring other distinctions; lastly, it offered to Buckingham a prospect of domestic happiness with a lady of considerable wit and spirit, and one whose affectionate attachment to

⁶⁶ Brydges's Peers of James I.

her husband was amply testified by her letters and conduct during their union.

One drawback, however, existed. The Lady Katherine was a Roman Catholic; and, although passionately attached to Buckingham, she, for some time, refused to go to church. Through the exertions, however, of the celebrated Williams, then Dean of Salisbury, and afterwards Lord Chancellor, she was ultimately converted. It was for her benefit that he composed his work, entitled, "A Manual of the Elements of the Orthodox Religion, by an old Prebend;" only twenty copies of which were printed, and these were all presented to the Marquis of Buckingham.⁶⁷ Such was the success of Williams's arguments, or the influence of the young lady's affection for her suitor, that, shortly before her marriage, a public profession of the reformed faith was made by Lady Katherine, on her partaking of the Holy Communion at the altar of a Protestant church.⁶⁸

Various were the rumours at Court concerning the progress of the engagement, which went on "untowardly;" amongst others, that the Countess of Buckingham, having taken the young lady away from her home, the Countess of Rutland, Lady Katherine's step-mother, had refused to receive

⁶⁷ Nichols, vol. iii., p. 589.

⁶⁸ Ibid, vol. iv., p. 606.

her back: the King was said to be in the plot.⁶⁹

The future Duchess of Buckingham was the only child of the Earl of Rutland, by his first wife, Frances, the widow of Sir William Beville, of Kilkhampton, Cornwall; ⁷⁰ and, during the lifetime of her mother, she was regarded as the sole heiress of all the wealth of her father. Upon the death of the first Countess of Rutland, the Earl married again, his second lady being the daughter of the Earl of Thanet, and the widow of Sir Henry Hungerford. Two sons were the offspring of this union, but before the courtship of Buckingham, death removed them from being obstacles to Lady Katherine's prosperity. They died in their infancy, from the effects, as it was believed in those credulous days, of wicked practices and sorcery.⁷¹ It was this celebrated case which is said to have convinced King James, before sceptical on the subject, of the existence of witchcraft, of the real agency of the power of darkness.⁷² The instruments of the foul fiend were three women in the

⁶⁹ State Papers, vol. cxiii., No. 38.

⁷⁰ Which afterwards came to the Granvilles, hence the name of Beville Granville.

⁷¹ This lady is said to have died in consequence of some medicine given her by Sir W. Raleigh;—a slanderous accusation.

⁷² Granger, from Howell. Art. Rutland.

service of the Earl of Rutland, Joan Flower, and her two daughters, who were stated to have entered into a formal contract with the devil, and to have become "devils incarnate themselves." Being dismissed from Belvoir Castle, on account of bad conduct, they made use of all the enchantments, spells, and charms that the black art comprised.

Henry Lord Roos, the eldest born of the house of Rutland, sank under the effects of these demoniacal influences, or rather, probably, from childish terrors, in 1613.⁷³

The Lady Katherine did not escape their machinations, having, with her brother Francis, been tortured by Flower and her accomplices.⁷⁴ Five years after the supposed exercise of their witchcraft, these wretched women were apprehended, and upon being rigidly examined by Lord Willoughby d'Eresby, Sir George Manners, and others, were committed to Lincoln gaol. Joan died on her way to prison, whilst wishing the bread and butter which she was eating, might

⁷³ State Papers, vol. cxii., No. 104.

⁷⁴ Even King James, it is said, was not exempt from the designs of the wicked. In the State Paper Office is the following entry:—"A man named Peacock, a schoolmaster, to be committed to the Tower and tortured, 'for practising sorcery on the King, to infatuate him in Sir Thomas Lake's business,'"

choke her if she were guilty. The two daughters were tried, confessed their guilt, and were executed at Lincoln.

By the death of her brother, Lady Katherine, whose more advanced years, and probably, whose courage and sense enabled her to master the dark terrors of the wicked Joan and her daughters, became a personage of no little importance in those venal times, when even a show of affection was scarcely thought necessary for the preliminary arrangements of the nuptial tie. Belvoir, her father's proud possession, stands upon the eminence, the fine prospect from which gave it the name it bears, in all its stately antiquity.⁷⁵ It was built in the time of the Conqueror, by Robert de Belvedeir, standard-bearer to the monarch. The edifice is seated on the confines of the counties of Lincoln and Leicester, Nottingham and Rutland, and it commanded, in the time of Francis Manners, until the present day, fourteen lordships.⁷⁶ Of this domain, Lady Katherine was now sole heiress. Repeated visits had been made by King James to it, and, indeed, a sojourn at Belvoir was always a principal feature

⁷⁵ The interior was destroyed by fire, in 1816; it has been rebuilt in a style of great magnificence.

⁷⁶ The present Duke of Rutland traces his descent in direct line from the founder of the castle, Robert de Belvedeir.

in a royal progress. A singular custom was formerly observed on the occasion of a royal visit to this castle. A family in Nottinghamshire, who held the Manor of Staunton, by the office of castle guard of the strong hold of Belvoir Castle, called the Staunton Tower, were required to present the keys of that tower to the monarch, in the same manner as the keys of a town are offered. The tenure required, in feudal times, that—

“Unto this forte with force and flagge,
The Staunton's stock should sticke,
For to defende against the foe,
Which at the same might kicke.”⁷⁷

The office of castle guard has long become a sinecure, but the importance of maintaining all those forms was such, that in 1618 a writ of inquiry was issued to show why the Castle of Belvoir should not fall into the king's hands, on account of some alienation. “This,” says a modern writer, “might appear an ungrateful return to the earl for his hospitality; but it was

⁷⁷ In January, 1814, when George IV., then Prince Regent, was received at Belvoir Castle, the key of Staunton Tower, of gold, and beautifully wrought, was presented to him in the drawing-room, on a gold cushion, by the Rev. Dr. Staunton, with a suitable address. *Nichols's Progress*, vol. ii., p. 458.

the customary process when property held under the crown became, on any occasion, alienated.”⁷⁸

At Belvoir, James made, on one occasion, a considerable number of knights, and, notwithstanding his writ of inquiry, he visited the hospitable palace every second or third year, from 1612 to 1621. In 1612, Henry, Prince of Wales, met his father at Belvoir Castle, riding thither from Richmond in two days, and received “very honourable entertainment” from Francis, Earl of Rutland, who, but a fortnight before, had attended the funeral of his brother at Bottesford.⁷⁹

In August, 1619, the king again visited Belvoir, but it does not appear certain that Buckingham accompanied his royal master. Probably, the preliminaries to the union which subsequently took place, may have been entered into on that occasion. Early in the following year, the marriage contract was signed, a ceremonial which generally preceded the completed marriage by a period of forty days. In this instance, that event did not take place until the sixteenth of May.

In the interim, Buckingham, either through the impatience of a lover, or, what is more likely, fearful of losing, from objections, the heiress of

⁷⁸ The whole of the castle stands in Leicestershire.

⁷⁹ Note in Nichols's Progresses, vol. i., p. 490.

Belvoir, took a step which cannot be condemned without a full knowledge of every circumstance connected with it ; but which seemed, on the first view, alike discreditable to the lover and to his mistress. He induced the Lady Katherine to leave her father's house, and conveyed her to his own apartments at Whitehall. Of this transaction, an account is given by Arthur Wilson, whose puritanical principles caused him to regard Buckingham with dislike, and perhaps to misrepresent his conduct, and Buckingham is stated to have kept the lady there for several days, and then to have returned her to her father. "The stout old earl," pursues the same writer, "sent him this threatening message, 'That he was too much of a gentleman to suffer such an indignity, and if he did not marry his daughter, to repair her honour, no greatness should protect him from his justice.'" It is conjectured that this elopement may have been contrived by Buckingham, in order to extort from the Earl of Rutland an unwilling consent. He quickly, therefore, says Wilson, "salved the wound before it grew to a quarrel; and if this marriage stopped the current of his sins, he had the less to answer for."⁸⁰

Such is one account of the obstacles which impeded that good understanding which afterwards

⁸⁰ Wilson's Life of James I., p. 149.

existed between the Earl of Rutland and his son-in-law. It appears, however, from an unpublished document in the State Paper Office, that Buckingham's exorbitant demands had disgusted the Earl; these were, 20,000*l.* in ready money, 4,000*l.* in land a year, and, in case of Lord Roos's death, 8,000*l.* in land. On this account, at first, had the match been broken off, but renewed upon the death of the son and heir, an event which some ascribed to witchcraft, others to the falling sickness, to which the poor youth was subject. Ruinour also attributed the interruption of the marriage-treaty to the religious scruples of Buckingham.⁸¹

After his daughter had left his house, the Earl wrote a letter, half indignant, half relenting, to Buckingham. In this epistle, the feelings of a father's struggle with the offended honour of the man. "I confess," he writes to Buckingham, "I took no great council in this business, for nature taught me that I was to advise my daughter to avoid the occasion of ill, as confidently as I assure myself she *is of ill.*" The aggrieved and unhappy parent had perhaps, afterwards, reason to retract that bitter expression. "I confess," he adds, "I had noble offers from you, but I expect real performance, which I hope in the end

⁸¹ Letter from Mr. Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton. Inedited State Papers, March 11th, 1619-20.

will bring comfort to us both." "His daughter," he touchingly remarks, "deserves no so great a care from a father whom she little esteems," as he had shown her; "yet," adds the Earl, "I must preserve her honour, if it were with the hazard of my life. And for calling our honours in question," he proceeds, "pardon me, my lord, that cannot be any fault of mine; for you would have me think that a contract, which, if you will make it so, be it as secret as you will, this matter is only at an end; therefore, the fault is only your lordship's if the world talk of us both."

All that the father demanded was, to use his own words, addressing Buckingham, as follows, "proof that she is yours, and then you shall find me tractable, like a loving father; although she is not worthy in respect of her neglect to me; yet, it being once done, her love and due respects to your lordship shall make me forget that which I confess I now am too sensible of." "To conclude, my lord, this is my resolution, if my conscience may not be fully satisfied she is yours, take your own courses; I must take mine, and I hope I may arm myself with patience, and not with rage. Your lordship shall even find I will be as careful of your honour as I shall be tender of mine own; and this is my resolution."⁸²

⁸² From Court and Times of King James. Bishop Goodman, vol. ii., p. 189.

To this searching letter, wrung from a father, uncertain how far his daughter had for ever exposed herself to shame, hoping, yet fearing, lest it might not prove so, and that she had fallen into honourable hands, Buckingham thus replied :—

“MY LORD,

“Your mistaking in your fashion of dealing with a free and honest heart, together with your froward carriage towards your own daughter, enforced me the other day to post to Hampton Court, and there cast myself at His Majesty’s feet, confessing freely unto him all that hath ever passed in privacy between your lordship and me concerning your daughter’s marriage, lest otherwise, by this, your public miscarriage of the business, it might by other means, to my disadvantage, have come to his knowledge. And now that I have obtained my master’s pardon for this, my first fault, for concealing, and going further in anything than His Majesty was acquainted with, I can delay no longer of declaring unto you how unkindly I take your harsh usage of me and your own daughter, which hath wrought this effect in me; that, since you esteem so little of my friendship and her honour, I must now, contrary to my former resolution, leave off the pursuit of that alliance any more, putting it in your free choice

to bestow her elsewhere, to your best comfort; for, whose fortune it shall ever be to have her, I will constantly profess that she never received any blemish in her honour but which came by your own tongue. It is true I never thought before to have seen the time that I should need to come within the compass of the law, by stealing of a wife against the consent of the parents, considering of the favours that it pleaseth His Majesty, though undeservedly, to bestow upon me. So leaving this to you and your wife's censure,

“ I rest,

“ Your lordship's servant,

“ BUCKINGHAM.” ⁸³

These protestations on the part of Buckingham, that the honour of Lady Katharine was untouched, are confirmed by the following extracts from certain letters relative to the affair, by which it is evident, first, that James himself promoted the abduction of the young heiress, and, secondly, that the Countess of Buckingham, whilst she favoured her son's schemes, never suffered the reputation of her daughter-in-law to be injured, since she did not, for an instant, permit her to leave her presence during the temporary absence from her father's house.

⁸³ From Harleian, 1581, p. 134.

“There is an accident happened which breeds great stir in town, which is concerning the taking away of the Earl of Rutland’s daughter, by my Lady Buckingham. Nobody knows what to think of it, but, in my opinion, the King is in the plot, for, with all his arts, he could not persuade her to go to church, to which it may be, they think, she refuses to come by reason of her mother and father. Now, you may remember what my lord said to your lordship, that he would not marry one who did not come to church. She loveth him, and I think now he makes trial of her, whether she will forsake all the world for his sake.”⁸⁴

“But the Lady Buckingham sayeth her father desired her to take her abroad with her, which she did, having his fatherly love imposed on her that she should not go out of her sight. She fell ill towards night, and rather than send her home with waiting gentlewomen, kept her that night to lie with herself, and brought her home the next day; her mother refusing to take her, so she went back, and there abided.”⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Buckingham.

⁸⁵ Inedited State Papers. Letter from Sir Edward Zouch to Lord Zouch, February 5th, 1619-20. Domestic. Sir Edward Zouch was a much esteemed wit and courtier. His family is now nearly, if not wholly extinct.—Brydges’s Peers of King James, p. 71.

Another account states that the "Lady of Buckingham" fetched the young lady away one Sunday, without her father's either leave or liking, "so that the next day he refused to receive her back, and Lady Katherine was obliged to take refuge with her uncle, being her nearest relation." Neither party, it was observed, gained by this mode of dealing, which was "subject to much construction."⁸⁶

It is touching to find the Earl of Rutland, some years afterwards, excusing himself from visiting the Court, that he might bear his daughter company in her solitude at Burleigh, during the long interval in which Buckingham, attending on the King at Windsor, left her in that then remote country seat, in retirement.⁸⁷

A coolness, however, continued for some time between these two noblemen; for on St. George's day, which was observed with much solemnity at Greenwich, the now haughty Buckingham showed his resentment against the Earl of Rutland by refusing to be consorted with him in one mess; and, coupling himself with the Earl of Leicester, left his future father-in-law alone, "and yet," as

⁸⁶ Inedited State Papers. Letter dated March 20th, 1619-20.

⁸⁷ State Papers. Letter from the Earl of Rutland. Domestic. 1625.

a contemporary relates, "the opinion is, the match must go on with his daughter, or else do her great wrong as well in other respects ; so, for his sake and his mother's, she is to be converted and receive the communion this Easter." ⁸⁸

The marriage took place eventually, at Lumley House, a mansion built in the time of Henry the Eighth, by Sir Thomas Wyatt, on the site of the ancient Monastery of Crutched Friars, near Tower Hill.⁸⁹ The ceremonial was conducted with great privacy, probably on account of the vexatious and awkward circumstances which had previously occurred.⁹⁰

It does not appear to which of his magnificent mansions the Marquis of Buckingham took his bride, after he had at last obtained possession of her hand. The man who only four years previously had appeared before a host of scoffing courtiers, in a thread-bare black suit, and whose slender allowance scarcely kept him from absolute penury, was now the owner of several stately residences. His apartments at Whitehall were held

⁸⁸ Nichols, iv., 606.

⁸⁹ This house was afterwards inhabited by the Lumley family. The navy office was once here, until removed to Somerset House. The immense warehouses belonging to the East India Company, now cover the spot where Buckingham's nuptials took place.—See Pennant's London, p. 237.

⁹⁰ Nichols, vol. iv., p. 607.

by virtue of his various offices near the King's person. That palace was the constant residence of James the First when in London. It was, at this time, in a very ruinous state, and the Banqueting House had been recently burned down. Inigo Jones⁹¹ was, indeed, employed in rebuilding it upon an extensive plan, only a portion of which was completed. It is, therefore, very unlikely that the honeymoon would be passed in the midst of noise and dust, although Whitehall, partially surrounded, as it was, by beautiful gardens, was not, by any means, devoid of that rural beauty for which the denizens of a royal metropolitan palace may now look in vain. Wanstead House, in Essex, which had escheated to the crown in 1606, upon the death of Charles Blount, Earl of Devonshire, was the first residence that Buckingham could properly call his own. He obtained it by a royal grant, and the King seems to have been well repaid for that act of generosity, by the pleasure which he took in visiting his favourite there. Burleigh-on-the-Hill, or Burleigh Harrington, so called to distinguish it from Burleigh Stamford, had been bought by Buckingham from the heir-general of the Harrington family, into whose possession it had come by

⁹¹ He was called by the Earl of Pembroke, "Iniquity Jones." It is said, in that nobleman's MS., that he had 16,000*l.* a year for keeping the King's houses in repair.—Walpole's *Anecdotes of Painting*, vol. ii., p. 271.

purchase in the time of Queen Elizabeth. It was seated upon a hill, rising abruptly from the vale of Catmore, commanding a view of the country around, and protecting the village of Burleigh. At Burleigh-on-the-Hill, King James was entertained during his first journey into England; there he was received by Sir John Harrington, who was then its owner.

After Burleigh had become the possession of the Marquis of Buckingham, he made it one of the most splendid seats in the island, until it not only rivalled, but, in some respects, excelled, Belvoir.⁹² Both the Marchioness of Buckingham and the Countess took a great interest in the place. In one of her letters to her husband, the Marchioness writes thus: "For Burly Shaw the wall is not very forward yett, and my lady" (her mother-in-law, the Countess of Buckingham) "bid me send you word that shee is gon done to look how things ar ther. Shee ses shee is about making a litell river to rune through the parke. It will be about xvi. foote broode. But shee ses shee wants money."⁹³

This magnificent structure, in which many a revel took place, and beneath whose roof many a masque was enacted, was not destined to remain a monument of Buckingham's splendour. Its very

⁹² Wright's History of Rutland, 1684, p. 30.

⁹³ Nichols, vol. iv., p. 778.

strength proved its destruction; for it was, on that account, selected, during the Rebellion, as a garrison for the Parliamentary troops, in order that they might, from that commanding station, at once harass the surrounding country, and protect their county committee. But they were unable to maintain the long line of defence which the extensive buildings presented, and therefore set them on fire, and thus, destroying the house and furniture, they deserted Burleigh.

The stables alone remained; and these alone perpetuated the magnificence of their first owner, being the finest in England. The ruins of Burleigh long served as a memento of the devastations of civil war, for the son and successor of George Villiers was unable to restore them. The estate was sold eventually to Daniel, Earl of Nottingham, who rebuilt the house, but of the structure which the princely taste of Buckingham planned, and which his lady mother embellished with her taste, little or no trace remains.⁹⁴

Newhall, in Essex, was another residence of the Marquis of Buckingham's. This property was purchased after Burleigh, in 1622, and was considered a great bargain, the money paid for it being twenty thousand pounds, for which there was a

⁹⁴ York House was not at present in his possession.

return of 1,200*l.* a year in land, whilst the wood was valued at about 4,000*l.* or 5,000*l.* The house, which cost originally 14,000*l.* in building, was immediately put under the hands of Inigo Jones, the King's surveyor, "to alter and translate" according to the modern fashion.⁹⁵ It is described by Evelyn, who visited it in 1656, in the following terms:—"I saw New Hall, built in a park, by Henry VII. and VIII., and given by Queen Elizabeth to the Earl of Sussex, who sold it to the late great Duke of Buckingham; and since seiz'd on by O. Cromwell (pretended Protector). It is a faire old house, built with brick, low, being only of two stories, as the manner then was; ye gatehouse better; the court large and pretty, the staircase of extraordinary wideness, with a piece representing Sir F. Drake's action in the year 1580, an excellent sea-piece; ye galleries are trifling; the hall is noble; the garden a faire plot, and the whole seate well accommodated with water; but, above all, I admir'd the fine avenue, planted with stately lime trees, in foure rowes, for neere a mile in length. It has three descents, which is the only fault, and may be reform'd. There is another faire walk of ye same at the mall and wilderness, with a tennis-court, and a pleasant terrace towards the

⁹⁵ Nichols, p. 881, from Harleian MSS., 6987.

park, which was well stor'd with deere and ponds."⁹⁶

Our ancestors understood well the adaptation of what may be called landscape gardening, to the style of their stately edifices; and Buckingham appears to have displayed in his improvements the magnificent and refined taste of a man whose nature was noble, and who was intended for a holier career than that of a royal favourite.

Buckingham's delight in improving his estates soon found scope here. "I have not beene yett att New Hall," wrote his lady to him, in 1623, when he was in Spain, "but I do intend to go shortly to see how things ar ther. The walk to the house is done, and the tennis-court is all most done, but the garden is not done, nor nothing to the bouling greene, and yett I told Totherby, and he tould me he would sett men a worke presently; but I warant you they will all be redey before you come." In a letter from the Countess of Denbigh, she informs her brother that there is one of the finest approaches to the house made that she ever saw. Buckingham, on his return from Spain, seems to have enjoyed thoroughly the sight of Newhall, in all its freshness, and to have gloried in its sylvan beauties. "I have found this morning," he writes

⁹⁶ For a fuller history of Newhall, see Nichols's *Progresses of Queen Elizabeth*, vol. i., p. 94-6.

to the King, "another fine wood that must go in with the rest, and two hundred acres of meadows, broomes, closes, and plentiful springs running through them, so that I hope Newhall shall be nothing inferior to Burleigh. My stags are all lusty, my calf bold, and others are so too. My Spanish colts are fat, and so is my jovial filley."⁹⁷ How gladly must he have returned to those more innocent pursuits of a country life, that formed so strong a contrast to the harassing existence of a courtier.⁹⁸

Another place much coveted by Buckingham was stoutly refused, even to the all-powerful favourite. This was Beddington Hall, in Surrey, then possessed, and still inhabited, by the ancient family of Carew, on whom it was bestowed, having been before a royal manor, by Queen Elizabeth. It was, probably, its vicinity to London which increased Buckingham's desire to possess this fine old house, with its stately precincts.

"The Marquis," as we learn from a private letter of the day, from London, "would settle himself hereabout, and is much in love with Beddington, near Croydon, having won over the King,

⁹⁷ Harleian MSS., 6987., quoted in Nichols's *Progresses of King James*.

⁹⁸ Newhall is now a nunnery.

Prince, and others, to move Sir Nicholas Carew about it; but it seems he will not be removed, by reason his uncle bestowed it so frankly on him, with purpose to continue his memory there, and to that end caused him to change his name. If his lordship would have patience, he would soon find out many places convenient enough, or, at farthest, stay for Gorhambury, whereof (they say) he hath the reversion after my Lord Chancellor's life, but upon what terms and conditions is only between themselves." ⁹⁹

Wanstead House was another seat of Buckingham's. The village which bears that name is situated on the borders of Waltham Forest; it commands a view of London and of Kent; the prospect stretching over a fertile and beautiful country. The manor of Wanstead had passed through various possessors to Sir John Heron, whose son, Sir Giles, being attainted, it was seized by the Crown. It was then granted to Robert, Lord Rich, who built the Manor House, then called Naked Hall House. The son of Lord Rich sold it to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester; and it thus became eventually the residence of two royal favourites. The unscrupulous Dudley owned it for some years. He enlarged and improved

⁹⁹ Inedited Letters in the State Paper Office, Mr. Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton, July 31, 1619.

the house; and here his marriage with the Countess of Essex was solemnised in 1578.

At his death, Wanstead passed into the hands of his widow, Lady Essex; and the Earl being much involved in debt, an inventory was made of his property, real and personal. The furniture at Wanstead was valued at one hundred and nineteen pounds, six shillings, and sixpence; the pictures at eleven pounds, thirteen shillings, and fourpence. Such is the small amount of that which was reckoned costly in those days; yet there were in this collection original portraits of Henry the Eighth, of his daughters, and Lady Cartmills, Lady Rich, and thirty-six others not particularized. The library, consisting of an old Bible, of the Acts and Monuments, old and torn, of seven Psalters and a Service book, was valued at thirteen shillings and eightpence. The horses, however, were rated at three hundred and sixteen pounds and threepence.

The Countess of Essex married Sir Christopher Blount, and by some family arrangements the house was conveyed to his son, Charles Blount, Earl of Devonshire. At his death it was escheated to the Crown, and became the property of Buckingham. In 1619, he sold it to Sir William Mildmay;¹ and in our days this once noble

¹ Wright's Hist. of Essex, vol. ii., p. 502-3.

possession, which has fallen, like its possessors, to ruin and destruction, came into the family of the present Earl of Mornington.²

A mineral spring was about this time discovered at Wanstead, and there was such "running there" by lords and ladies, that the spring was almost "drawn dry," "and if it should hold on," writes Mr. Chamberlain, "it would put down the waters at Tunbridge, which, for these three or four years, have been much frequented, specially in summer, by many great persons, insomuch that they who have seen both, say it is not inferior to the Spa for good company, numbers of people, and other appearances."³

To one or other of these stately abodes Buck-

² Nichols, vol. iii., p. 364.

³ Sir William Mildmay's descendants conveyed it to Sir Joseph Child, whose son Richard, afterwards created Earl of Tilney, built Wanstead House, well known in modern days, on the site of the mansion which had been the home of Leicester and of Buckingham. The new house was erected in 1715. It descended, in due time, to Miss Tilney Long, who married the Hon. Wellesley Pole, now Earl of Mornington. In 1825 she died, and Wanstead House was sold in lots under the hammer. The park is now let out for grazing cattle. The ancient church of Wanstead has also been pulled down, and a new one erected; so that those who look for any traces of Leicester and Buckingham will not find them at Wanstead.—*Note in Wright's "Essex,"* p. 1150.

ingham perhaps conveyed his bride; although the custom of travelling immediately after marriage is one of more recent date. Such, however, were the future homes of the young Marchioness.

The year succeeding the nuptials of the Marquis was passed by him and his bride in a constant round of courtly revels. During these festivities, various incidents, of little import in themselves, marked the determination of James to accomplish the marriage which he now had at heart between his son and the Infanta of Spain. The slightest objection to that desired event was dangerous to the meanest of his subjects. A man named Almed, who held a subordinate situation, having presented the Marquis of Buckingham with a treatise against the match, was cast into prison by the King's express commands.⁴ Secretary Naunton was suspended from his situation for treating with the French ambassador concerning a union between the Prince and Henrietta Maria, and was obliged to write an humble acknowledgment of his errors to Buckingham, and to address to James an epistle penned, as he expressed it, "in grief and anguish of spirit."⁵ Buckingham interposed in his behalf, and prevented the secretary's being turned out of his

⁴ Nichols, v. 699.

⁵ Bishop Goodman, ii., 228.

lodgings at Whitehall, by which many, looking upon Naunton as a ruined man, for having lent an ear to the proposal of France, were already intriguing.⁶ The infatuation of James, promoted, it was believed, by the counsels of Buckingham, brought infinite disgrace upon the English court, and was repaid by the haughty Spaniards, acting through the crafty Gondomar, with contempt.

Even the pulpits were *tuned*, as Queen Elizabeth would have said, to one key. "The King," Mr. Chamberlain wrote to Sr Dudley Carleton, "ordered the Bishop of London to warn his clergy not to preach against the Spanish match, but they do not obey."⁷

The resolution taken by James to withhold assistance to the Bohemians in their revolt against the power of Austria, and his determined refusal to give to his son-in-law, who had been made King of Bohemia, any higher title than that of Prince Palatine, were resented by the jealous people whom James was so incapable even of comprehending, and his English subjects regarded his neutrality with disgust. "The happiness and tranquillity of their own country," remarks Hume, "became distasteful to the English when

⁶ Bishop Goodman, 243.

⁷ State Papers, Calendar, vol. cxviii., No. 29.

they reflected on the grievances and distresses of their Protestant brethren in Germany." Prince Charles besought his father on his knees, and with tears, to take pity upon his sister Elizabeth and her family, and to suffer himself no longer to be abused with treaties. The young and generous Prince entreated the King, since His Majesty was himself old, to allow him to raise a royal army, and to permit him to be the leader of it, being assured that his subjects would be ready to follow him. To this James replied, "that he would hear once more from Spain, and that if he had not satisfaction, he would give his son and the state leave to do what they would."⁸

Still James was deaf alike to arguments and to parental affection, and defended his pacific measures upon the notion that Austria, swayed by his justice and moderation, would restore the Palatinate, which had been wrested from Frederic, his son-in-law, by Spinola, especially if his son's marriage with the Infanta were effected. He was blind to the fact that his powers of negotiation would be wholly unable to achieve this end, nor when it was achieved, would the result be such as his hopes anticipated. His reluctance to engage in war, his want of courage in avowing to

⁸ Letter in Bishop Goodman's Life, vol. ii., p. 215, from Mr. Mead to Sir M. Stuteville.

his subjects the measures which he meant to pursue, were alike indicative of that pusillanimous spirit which exposed him to the contempt of foreign courts, and rendered him unpopular at home.

Not having called a parliament for seven years, he now sent forth a writ of summons in the beginning of the year 1621; an event from which all men "who had any religion," as Sir Symonds D'Ewes expressed it, "hoped much good, and daily prayed for a happy issue; for both France and Germany needed support and help from England, or the true professions of the Gospel were likely to perish in each nation under the power and tyranny of the anti-Christian tyranny."

The opening of Parliament was graced by a splendid procession from Whitehall to Westminster; but although the progress was short, it was varied by several significant circumstances. Prince Charles appeared, on this occasion, riding on horseback between the Sergeants-at-arms and the Gentlemen Pensioners, with a rich coronet on his head. Next before his Majesty rode Henry Vere, Earl of Oxford, Lord Great Chamberlain of England, with Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, Earl Marshal. These noblemen were bare-headed. Then appeared James, with a crown on his head,

“and most royally caparisoned.” But the personage who excited the most general interest was Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, a man only sixty-three years of age, but accounted in those days—such is the increased value of life in ours—“decrepit with age.” This nobleman, the son of the Protector Somerset, was dear to the people as the relative of Lady Jane Grey, whose sister, the Lady Catherine, he had married; an act for which he had incurred a long and unmerited imprisonment in the time of Elizabeth. He died shortly after the opening of parliament.

The King was now manifestly broken and infirm; the disease, then deemed incurable, which caused him intense agony, softened his petulance, and produced a courtesy that touched the bystanders with pity. As he rode along, he spoke often and lovingly to the crowd three-fold thick; calling out, with more good-will than kingly dignity, “God bless ye, God bless ye”—a striking contrast to his usual practice, or, to use the words of D’Ewes, to his “hasty and passionate custom, which often, in his sudden distemper,” would bid a plague upon those who flocked to see him.

Such was one of the remarks made on this day. Another was, that whilst the windows of Whitehall were crowded by the great and fair, James

saluted none of them as he passed along, except the Marchioness of Buckingham and her mother-in-law.

He was observed to speak often and particularly to Gondomar, and his whole demeanour was, for some time, kindly and cheerful.

On a sudden, however, his gracious countenance became overcast. On gazing up at one window, he observed it to be full of gentlewomen and ladies, all in yellow bands: this fashion had been discountenanced at Court ever since the trial of the Countess of Somerset; her accomplice, Mrs. Turner, having been hanged, by sentence, "in her yellow tiffany ruffs and cuffs," she being the first inventor of the yellow starch.⁹ But certain "high-handed women," as King James termed them, chose, it seems, perhaps out of despite to Buckingham, to retain what was conceived to be a memento of the Somerset faction. No sooner did the King perceive them than he cried out "a plague take ye—are ye there?" and immediately the ladies, in alarm, vanished from the window. James was so much exhausted by his exertions this day, and by a speech of an hour long, in which nevertheless he commended brevity, that he was obliged to be carried in a chair from the

⁹ Nichols, iv., 630; and iii., 120.

Abbey, where he attended service, to the Parliament House.

By these and other symptoms, the people saw too plainly that the interests of Spain were adopted by the Favourite. Parliament, opened with so much state and promise, was opposed to the King's wishes, and deprecated the Spanish alliance. Declamations against the growth of Popery were continually heard in that assembly, and formed a constant feature in its discussions during the reign of the Stuarts; these invectives were now exasperated by the treaty with Spain, and the indifference of James to the sufferings of the Protestant cause on the Continent. In the House of Lords, the presence of Prince Charles, around whom all the bishops, and most of the courtiers, flocked, was supposed to overawe the debates. All this time, James had "engaged his crown, blood, and soul," such were his expressions, for the recovery of the Palatinate. Nevertheless, he dissolved Parliament early in the ensuing year; and the fruitless treaties and debasing intrigues went on as usual.¹⁰

An embassy extraordinary from the French King, who had visited Calais, proved the touch-

¹⁰ Wilson, Hume, Oldmixon.

stone of much latent jealousy. An attendance of fifty or sixty persons of rank, and a retinue of three hundred, gave to the Marquis de Cadenat, brother to the Duc de Luisues, the favourite of the King of France, all the dignity that so numerous a company of the flower of their country could ensure. The ambassador and his suite were met at Gravesend by the Earl of Arundel, and conducted to Denmark House, where the Earl, merely accompanying the Marquis to the foot of the first stair which led to his lodgings, took his leave, saying that there were gentlemen there who would show him to his apartments. This was a decided slight. Shortly afterwards, an affront was given by the Countess of Buckingham, owing to her having placed the Marquise de Cadenat and her niece, Mademoiselle de Luc, at a ball at Whitehall, beneath her own daughter-in-law, the Marchioness of Buckingham.

On the eighth of January, a tilting match was performed, to entertain the French Marquis, wherein Prince Charles broke a lance with great success. Amongst the tilters was the "beloved Marquis of Buckingham," so called by Sir Symonds D'Ewes, who thus describes the appearance of the Favourite on the occasion :—

"Seeing the Marquis of Buckingham discours-

ing with two or three French monsieurs, I joined to them, and most earnestly viewed him for about half-an-hour's space at the least, which I had the opportunitie the more easilie to accomplish, because he stood all that time he talked, bareheaded. I saw everything in him full of delicacie and handsome features; yea, his hands and face seemed to me especiallie effeminate and curious." The contrast with the homely-featured foreigners who surrounded him seems to have struck this not very good-natured observer. "It is possible," he adds, "he seemed more accomplist, because the French monsieurs that invested him weere verie swarthie, hard-featured men."

All irritation seems to have subsided by this time, and the natural hospitality of well-bred Englishmen to have reappeared. In the midst of the business and pleasure which occupied the English Court, the unpopularity of the Spanish match was, however, so apparent that Gondomar begged to retire to Nonsuch Palace, to avoid the "fear and fury" of Shrove Tuesday.

In the summer of this year,¹¹ James visited his Favourite at Burleigh, when he was so much pleased with his entertainment, that he could not forbear expressing his contentment in certain

¹¹ 1620.

verses, in which he said "that the air, the weather, and everything else, even the stags and bucks in their fall, did seem to smile." The chief diversion prepared for His Majesty was a masque by Ben Jonson, entitled "The Metamorphosed Gipsies;" it was acted first at Burleigh, then at Belvoir, and lastly at Windsor, within the course of a few months.

Buckingham employed the poet's pen at his own expense, and himself enacted the Captain of the gipsies; and, in his disguise, marching up to the King, he thus addressed him, with the freedom of his lawless tribe:—

With you, lucky bird, I begin :
I aim at the best, and I trow you are he,
Here's some luck already, if I understand
The grounds of mine art ; here's a gentleman's hand,
I'll kiss it for luck sake ; you should, by this line,¹²
Love a horse and a hound, but no part of a swine ;¹³
To hunt the brave stag, not so much for the food
As the weal of your body and wealth of your blood.

In this fashion did Buckingham flatter the tastes of James, who, priding himself on his prowess in the chase, which he followed in a

¹² The line of life in Palmistry is the line encompassing the ball of the thumb.—See, for this masque, Gifford's edition of Ben Jonson.

¹³ James's known dislike of pork was one trait of his Scottish descent.

ruff and trowsers,¹⁴ was charmed with any allusion to his favourite diversion.

As the Captain of the Gipsies further pursued the telling of the King's fortune, his verse changed its metre, and touched on more serious themes :—

Could any doubt that saw this hand,
Or who you are, or what command
You have upon the state of things?
Or would not say you were let down
From Heaven, on Earth, to be the Crown
And top of all your neighbour Kings?

In another verse, he gracefully referred to the royal bounty to himself :—

Myself a gipsy here do shine,
Yet are you maker, sir, of mine.
Oh! that confession should content
So high a bounty, that doth know
No part of motion but to flow,
And giving, never to repent.

These poetical addresses were interspersed with dances and songs. After the second dance, a gipsy, supposed to be Viscount Purbeck, the brother of the Marquis, paid a tribute to Prince Charles :—

As my Captain hath begun
With the sire, I take the son!
Your hand, sir!

¹⁴ Grainger.

Of your fortune be secure,
Love and she are both at your
Command, sir !

See what states are here at strife,
Who shall tender you a wife,
A brave one ?

And a fitter for a man
Than is offered here, you can
Not have one.

She is sister of a Star,
One, the noblest that now are,
Bright Hesper ;

Whom the Indians in the East,
Phosphor call, and in West,
Hight Vesper

Courses even with the sun
Doth her mighty brother run
For splendour.

—alluding to the boast of the Spaniards that
the sun never sets on their King's dominions.

The Marchioness of Buckingham was next
addressed, in these terms :—

But, lady, either I am tipsy,
Or you are in love with a gipsy ;
Blush not, Dame Kate,
For early or late,
I do assure you it will be your fate,
Nor need you once be ashamed of it, madam,
He's as handsome a man as e'er was Adam.

The fortunes of Cecily, Countess of Rutland, the stepmother of the Marchioness, of the Countess of Exeter, and of the Countess of Buckingham, were then told. In the verses addressed to the last mentioned, the beauty and attractions of the lady were thus alluded to :—

Your pardon, lady, here you stand,
If some should judge you by your hand,
The greatest felon in the land,

Detected.

I cannot tell you by what arts,
But you have stol'n so many hearts,
As they would make you at all parts
Suspected.

The Lady Purbeck was the next theme :—

Help me, woman, here's a book,
Where I would for ever look ;
Never yet did Gipsy trace
Such true lines in hands or face.
Venus here doth Saturn move,
That you should be Queen of Love,
Only Cupid's not content ;
For, though you do the theft disguise,
You have robb'd him of his eyes.

The fair, frail being, whose loveliness was thus panegyricized, fled from her husband's house three years afterwards, never to return. "She was," says the historian Wilson, "a lady of transcending beauty." Ben Jonson's lines on her face :—

Though your either cheek discloses
 Mingled baths of milk and roses;
 Though your lips be banks of blisses,
 Where he plants and gathers kisses—
 were not, therefore, greatly exaggerated.

Her mother—the mother who had bartered her
 at the altar—was next flattered :—

Mistress of a fairer table,
 Hath no history or fable;
 Others' fortunes may be shewn,
 You are builder of your own,
 And whatever Heaven hath gi'n you,
 You preserve the state still in you.

Here ended the fortune-telling. And now, a
 dance of clowns, "Cockrel, Clod, Town'head, and
 Puffy," each personated by knights, delighted the
 company with a colloquy in prose, and in their
 hands the conduct of the piece remained until the
 Gipsies, metamorphosed, "appeared in rich habits,
 to close the whole with a eulogy upon King
 James."

A song was introduced just before the conclu-
 sion :—

Oh, that we understood
 Our good !
 There's happiness indeed in blood,
 And store—
 But how much more
 When virtue's flood
 In the same stream doth hit !
 As that grows high with years, so happiness
 With it !

Thus ended this masque, which furnishes, in the estimation of a great critic, "specimens of poetic excellence, injurious flattery, and adroit satire."

James was delighted with his cheer at Burleigh.¹⁵ Before departing for Belvoir, he noticed, with much satisfaction, that there was a prospect of there soon being an heir to the house of Villiers; and, after uttering a fervent wish that all might prosper, he called upon the Bishop of London, by way of amen, to give the young couple a blessing in his presence on the interesting expectation.¹⁶

This gay scene was followed by some mischances. James, riding out after dinner, from Theobalds, early in the next year,¹⁷ was thrown into the New River; ¹⁸ the ice broke, and he fell in, nothing appearing above the water except his boots. Buckingham, who was not with him, was sent for from Hertfordshire, and posted away to attend his royal master. The King recovered from this accident, but his infirmities increased daily; he was confined for some time at Theobalds, "by reason of a defluxion," which, setting in his leg, assumed the form of gout; and he

¹⁵ Gifford.

¹⁶ Nichols, vol. iv., p. 710.

¹⁷ 1622.

¹⁸ Or, as it was called, Middleton's Water, from the great contriver of that inestimable improvement, the introduction of water into the metropolis, Sir Hugh Middleton.

was obliged to be carried out in a litter when he went to see the deer.

Preparations were now made for that event to which James had referred when he had called the Bishop of London to bless the parents of the babe yet unborn. Yet, contrary to His Majesty's expectations, it did not prove to be a "fine boy." Early in the year 1622, a daughter, afterwards christened Mary, gladdened the hearts of the young and happy parents. On the twenty-seventh of March, the Marchioness was sufficiently recovered to be churched in the King's chamber, where she dined, notwithstanding that the King was in bed. The Duchess of Lennox accompanied her on this occasion. This lady, was recently married, for the third time, to the Duke of Lennox, her first husband having been Henry Purnell, Esq.; her second, Edward Seymour, first Earl of Hertford. Ludowick, Duke of Richmond and Lennox, her husband, was a cousin of the King's,¹⁹ being grandson to John D'Aubignie, who was brother to Mathew, Earl of Lennox, grandfather of His Majesty. The Duke of Lennox deservedly enjoyed a great share of the King's confidence; and it was a proof of the highest consideration for the

¹⁹ Granger's Biography, Reign of King James, vol. i., p. 237.

young Marchioness of Buckingham, that his duchess should be her companion at the ceremony of churching. The Duchess attended her also in her sickness, and was rewarded for "her great pains and care in making broths and caudles" for the invalid, by a present from the King of a fair chain of diamonds, with his picture suspended to it, Prince Charles and the Marquis of Buckingham being charged to convey it to the Duchess, who, henceforth, came to be "in great request, and to be much courted and respected by the Prince."²⁰

²⁰ Nichols' Progresses, vol. iv., p. 756.

CHAPTER VI.

REVIEW OF THE STATE OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS—DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT—PROTEST—JAMES TEARS IT OUT OF THE JOURNALS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—ACTS OF OPPRESSION—CASE OF THE EARL OF OXFORD—OF LORD SOUTHAMPTON—PERSECUTION OF SIR EDWARD COKE—THE CONDUCT AND IMPEACHMENT OF LORD BACON—THE PART TAKEN BY BUCKINGHAM IN THIS AFFAIR—THE ABUSES OF MONOPOLIES—CASE OF SIR GILES MOMPESSEON—OF SIR FRANCIS MICHELL—BACON'S LETTERS TO PARLIAMENT—HIS ILLNESS—THE GREAT SEAL TAKEN FROM HIM—JAMES'S RELUCTANCE TO ACT WITH VIGOUR—SHEDS TEARS UPON THE OCCASION—BACON STILL PROTECTED BY BUCKINGHAM—WILLIAMS, BISHOP OF LINCOLN, IS MADE CHANCELLOR—HIS CHARACTER, BY BISHOP GOODMAN.



CHAPTER VI.

It is now necessary to make a short review of the state of political affairs coëval with these successive manifestations of a blind partiality shown by James to Buckingham.

The autumn of 1621 had witnessed the dissolution of the Parliament. This step, which was imputed to the advice of Buckingham, was hastened by a protest from the two houses of commons, declaring "that the liberties, franchises, and jurisdictions of Parliament are the ancient and undoubted birthright of the subjects of England;" asserting the point that the arduous affairs of state, the making of laws and redress of grievances, are the proper subjects of debate in Parliament; and maintaining the privilege of each member to enjoy entire freedom of speech.

This protest, which James and his son would have done well to have for ever remembered, was drawn forth by the King's resentment at the interference in the Spanish marriage.²¹ "He considered it," he said, "presumptuous in the Parliament humbly to beseech him to permit his son to marry a Protestant Princess; and he intimated that if they had fixed upon any person or place, he should have thought it high treason."

The proclamation which announced the dissolution was ascribed to the pen of Archbishop Laud, who now exercised an ascendancy over Buckingham; and the King, hastening to London, called a Privy Council, and, sending for the journal of the House of Commons, declared the protest void, and tore it from the book with his own hands.²²

These rash and blamable measures were resented by the whole kingdom. They were followed by acts of oppression and injustice. The first object of the King's wrath was Henry Vere, Earl of Oxford. This young nobleman, who was endowed with great ability, courage, and high reputation, was one of those young and daring aspirants whose honours were not only inherited from a long

²¹ Oldmixon.

²² Ibid.

series of noble progenitors, but by merit made their own.²³ He had already distinguished himself in the cause that was dearest to the hearts of the English—that of the Palatinate, and had extorted from the King one regiment to employ in the service of his son-in-law, Frederic. The body of men whom he led to the unequal contest, was, says a contemporary, “the gallantest for the persons and outward presence of men,” that, “in many ages, ever appeared at home or abroad.” It consisted almost entirely of gentlemen, the flower of the commoners of England, who went to improve themselves in the art of war, to which the English had for years been strangers. Oxford, with his noble associates and brave soldiers, did all that was possible for man to do; and then, finding that there was no support from England, returned, hopeless, but not disgraced.

Here was one of those “gallant spirits who aimed at the public liberty more than at their own interest;” and who yet, when the Government which they served, or the prerogative which they held sacred, was attacked, were fierce in defence of the King and his authority; supporting,” says Arthur Wilson, “the old Eng-

²³ Brydges's Peers of James I.

lish honour, they would not let it fall to the ground.”²⁴

In spite of this acknowledged loyalty, the Earl of Oxford was accused by a man named White, henceforth called Oxford-White, of having spoken against the King; and was committed to the Tower, where he was long imprisoned, until, on account of his known bravery, he was made one of Buckingham's Vice-Admirals on the English coast. A letter, addressed to Buckingham, whilst the Earl was under this disgrace, appealing to the King, to the favourite's own conscience, whether he had ever harboured any treasonable thoughts, obtained for him, perhaps, this tardy justice: — “If it shall please the King,” wrote the gallant Vere, “to line me out my path to death (the period we must all travel to) by imprisonment, I shall be far from repining at the sentence, but with all humbleness will undergo it, and employ my heartiest prayers for the long continuance of his health and happiness.”²⁵

The persecution of Vere reflects infinite dishonour upon Buckingham—but that bright star was fast losing the purity of its lustre. Buckingham was an altered man. Unbounded pros-

²⁴ Wilson, p. 162.

²⁵ Cabala.

perity was changing the once generous foe into an avenger.

Henry Wriothesley, the Earl of Southampton, was the next subject of the Marquis's wrath. Upon this brave peer the King's favours had hitherto been showered down, and he had been endeared to the people by his friendship for the unfortunate Earl of Essex, on whose account he had suffered confinement in the reign of Elizabeth. On the accession of James, Lord Southampton was brought from "the prison to the palace."²⁶ His lands had been forfeited to the crown: they were immediately restored. On the meeting of the first Parliament called by James, the Earl was restored by a bill, read after the recognition of the King, to his titles.²⁷ The rest of this nobleman's life was spent in promoting worthy objects, to some of which even the lettered attached ridicule. For instance, his patronage of colonization, his sending ships to America for the purpose of discovery and traffic, excited the ridicule of some of the caustic geniuses of the day. Yet Lord Southampton received many tributes from the learned; and such was his protection of letters, that he was called "learning's best favourite."²⁸ It was,

²⁶ Brydges's Peers of James I., p. 324.

²⁷ Ibid, 326.

²⁸ By Richard Braithwayte in the dedication of his Scholar's Medley.—See Brydges's Peers, p. 325.

however, his highest praise that he was the patron and friend of Shakspeare.

It was upon this popular nobleman that the ire of Buckingham next fell. It must, however, be acknowledged, that Lord Southampton's credit at Court had been on the decline previous to the altercation which took place between him and Buckingham in the House of Lords; the Earl having incurred the royal displeasure on several occasions, especially in opposing illegal patents, a tender subject which had lately been under the consideration of Parliament. Under these circumstances, when he called the Favourite to order in a debate of the House of Lords, he only rekindled the embers of former animosities. Prince Charles attempted, indeed, successfully, to check the dispute; nevertheless, Southampton sustained an imprisonment of twelve days upon the adjournment of Parliament. He was allowed, on the eighteenth of July, to go to his own house at Titchfield, where he was, however, a prisoner.²⁹ The famous Selden, Pym, and Sir Robert Philips, were imprisoned in the Tower of London for freedom of speech;³⁰ in short, during

²⁹ Oldmixon, p. 56.

³⁰ Lord Southampton died in a foreign service, that of the States-general, in the defensive alliance at Bergen-op-Zoom in 1624. His family fell into the deepest pecuniary distress, and afterwards solicited the aid of Buckingham.—See "*Calala*," p. 299.

this Parliament, were the seeds of that arbitrary disposition, which afterwards manifested itself so calamitously, first ripened. It was not among the least sources of public regret, that the heir-apparent should have witnessed, and in some measure participated in, these flagrant oppressions.

Buckingham either perceived that these infringements upon the liberty of the subject had been permitted to go far enough, or his native good nature prevailed over the virulence of party and the love of power; for on the nineteenth of July he came to London, visited the Earl of Northumberland in the Tower, passed two hours with the Earl of Southampton at Westminster, and with the Earl of Oxford at Sir Thomas Cockaine's. "This was taken," writes Mr. Chamberlain, "for a good presage, like the coming of St. Elmo after a tempest."³¹ Two days afterwards, the Lord Keeper Williams took the Earl of Southampton to Theobald's where the king was. A long conference ensued; the Lord Keeper, the Marquis of Buckingham, and Southampton being the only persons admitted to the royal presence. On the following day, Southampton, was set at liberty.³²

Sir Edward Coke was likewise among those who

³¹ Nichols, iv., 670.

³² Oldmixon says not until the 1st of September (see p. 56); but Mr. Chamberlain's information is more precise and impartial.

incurred the displeasure of James for freedom of speech. Imprisonment in the Tower followed his offence. The locks and doors of his chambers in the Temple were sealed up, and several securities for money taken away. Immured in prison, his family not being suffered to approach him, he had yet another trial to encounter. James, whose meanness equalled his improvidence, took this base occasion to sue Coke for an old pretended debt due from Sir Christopher Hatton to Queen Elizabeth. The reply of the Solicitor-general, Sir John Walter, when the brief of this iniquitous case was sent to him, is worthy of a nobler character of mind than that usually imputed to the English lawyer of that period. "Let my tongue," he answered, "cleave to the roof of my mouth whenever I ope it against Sir Edward Coke;" yet the suit was rigorously prosecuted. "That spirit of fiery exhalation"³³ was not daunted even by this petty and malignant persecution. It was observed of him that he lost his advancement in the same way that he got it³⁴—by his tongue. To the last, he steadily resisted the oppressions of the crown, and his character, odious as it was to his contemporaries, odious when we reflect upon him as the vituperative judge of Raleigh, and too

³³ Wilson.

³⁴ Life of Sir Edward Coke, published by the Society for the Diffusion of Knowledge, p. 22.

justly censured by Bacon "for insulting misery,"³⁵ has received the respect and gratitude of posterity for its general political independence.

The fate of Bacon himself excited a still more mournful interest in good minds, than the injuries inflicted upon Coke.

It becomes necessary for the biographer of Villiers, to examine into the circumstances of an affair with which, as with every public event of the day, he was intimately connected. Bacon, in afterwards addressing James, alludes to Buckingham when he imputes his degradation to the personal views of some secret foe. "I wish that, as I am the first, so I may be the last of sacrifices in your times; and when, from private appetite, it is resolved that a creature shall be sacrificed, it is easy to pick up sticks enough from any thicket, whither he has strayed, to make a fire to offer it with."³⁶

In the early period of his career, Buckingham had owed much to the countenance, and more to the advice, of Bacon. The author of the *Novum*

³⁵ "Perhaps," says Mr. Amos, "Sir Edward Coke never descended lower in point of wit and insult of misery, than when he told Cuffe, when under trial for high treason, 'that he would give him a cuff that should let him down by-and-by.'"—Grand Oyer of Poisoning, p. 460.

³⁶ Life of Bacon, by Basil Montague. Preface, p. 9.

Organum seems to have been among the first to discern that remarkable association of personal and mental qualities in Villiers, which promised to secure him an ascendancy over James. Bacon lent the lustre of his name to shine upon the young courtier, and expected in return that aid which Buckingham, he soon perceived, would have it in his power to bestow. A mutual dependence was established; Buckingham existed on the capital of Bacon's intellect; Bacon throve on the inferiority of the youth, conscious of his defects, and wise enough to remedy his own weakness by the strength of another.

No greater proof of confidence in a friend can be given than to seek his advice, and Villiers paid Bacon that tribute. He requested him "to instruct him how to fulfil his high station, how to serve the King, how to conciliate the people." In consequence of this, Bacon had addressed to the Favourite a letter of advice,³⁷ "such," observes

³⁷ The essay or letter treated of the following subjects :—1. Matters that concern religion, and the Church, and Churchmen. 2. Matters concerning justice, and the laws, and the professions thereof. 3. Councillors, and the council-table, and the great offices and officers of the kingdom. 4. Foreign negotiations and embassies. 5. Peace and war, both foreign and civil, and in that the navy and forts, and what belongs to them. 6. Trade at home and abroad. 7. Colonies, or foreign plantations. 8. The court and curialty.

the biographer of Bacon, "as is not usually given in courts, but of a strain equally free and friendly, calculated to make the person to whom it was addressed good and great, and equally honourable to the giver and the receiver; advice which contributed not a little to his prosperity in after life."³⁸

This manual of a courtier's duty, it must be owned, was sadly at variance with the practice that followed these nobly conceived instructions on the part of him who gave them.

"You are,"—Bacon thus addressed Villiers—"as a new risen star, and the eyes of all are upon you; let not your own negligence make you fall like a meteor." "Next to religion," he adds elsewhere, "let your care be to promote justice. By justice and mercy is the King's throne established." "And as far as it may rest in you, let no arbitrary power be intended. The people of this kingdom love the laws thereof, and nothing will oblige them more than a confidence of the free enjoying of them." "Your greatest care must be," he adds, towards the conclusion, "that the great men of the court—for you must give me leave to be plain with you, for so is your injunction laid upon me—yourself in the first place, who are first in the eye of all men, give no

³⁸ Life of Lord Bacon, by Basil Montague, p. 181.

just cause of scandal either by light, vain, or by oppressive carriage.”³⁹

Notwithstanding these admirable precepts, the years during which Lord Bacon held the Great Seal, and during which Villiers ruled predominant, were, as it has been justly observed, “the darkest and most shameful in English history.”⁴⁰ The domestic government of James and his favourite, in weakness and want of high principle, corresponded but too mournfully with their foreign policy; with their indifference to the great struggle for the interests of liberty and of Protestantism in Germany; with their vacillating and cowardly counsels. Whilst the continental nations were venting their surprise and indignation in sallies of ridicule directed against England, the King, who had nothing to bestow in the aid of a loyal cause in which the welfare of his own child was bound up, resorted at home to the most disgraceful expedients in order to exalt his favourite. During this period, Buckingham held an absolute empire over the actions of Bacon. A system of persecution against Coke had followed the disgraceful affair of Sir John Villiers’ marriage. In an unlucky hour, Bacon interfered between Lady Hatton and her injured husband; he even descended to lend

³⁹ Lord Bacon’s Works, i., p. 518-19.

⁴⁰ Macaulay’s Essay on Bacon in the *Edinburgh Review*.

himself to the low affairs of these vulgar great, and to take part against his enemy, Coke, and with his arrogant wife. This was during the King's absence in Scotland: as matters then stood, this proceeding on the part of the Lord Keeper militated against the marriage which Buckingham had at heart. Bacon was soon taught, therefore, to see his error. The Favourite resented his interference, and refused to be pacified. In vain did the Lord Keeper stay certain proceedings against Coke which had been instituted in the Star Chamber; in vain did he hasten to testify his submission to Buckingham. Two successive days he went to the stately apartments of the Favourite; waited meekly in an ante-chamber, seated on an old box, with the Great Seal of England at his side. At length, when he was admitted, he threw himself at the feet of Buckingham, and swore never to rise thence till he had received the pardon of the lofty personage whom he had once instructed in the art of conducting himself with dignity.⁴¹

This was not such conduct as would entitle a man to respect even from him on whom he cringed. Yet Bacon, in one of his letters addressed to Buckingham, declares him to have been the "truest and perfectest mirror of friendship that ever

⁴¹ Sir Anthony Weldon's Court and Character of King James.

was in a court;” and protests that “he should count every day lost in which he should not study his well-doing in thought, or do his name honour in speech, or perform service for him indeed.”⁴² Nor is the statement given by Weldon, of the manner in which the seals were offered to Bacon by Buckingham, credible. According to that writer, the Favourite, when he sent to proffer them to Bacon, accompanied them with an insulting message, saying, that whilst he knew him to be a man of excellent parts, he was also aware “that he was an errant knave, apt, in his prosperity, to ruin any that had raised him in his adversity;” yet from regard to his master’s service, he had obtained the seals for him; but with this assurance, that if he ever should act to him as he had done to others, he would be cast down as much below as he was now above any honour that he had expected,⁴³ alluding to the flagrant ingratitude and perfidy of Bacon to Essex. But this story, supported by no evidence, is at variance with probability; and since it rests upon the authority of one who is always inveterate against Buckingham, it may be discarded as wholly unworthy of belief.

That Buckingham knew well the character of

⁴² Biog. Brit. Art. Bacon, note.

⁴³ Bacon’s Works, ii., p. 201.

the Lord Keeper before he promoted him to the Chancellorship—that he calculated on his subservience to himself, expressed in his letters, so that posterity may judge of Bacon's professions—that he had discovered that the doctrine of expediency influenced the practice of Bacon, is almost certain; for he did not hesitate to sway him to the most disgraceful countenance of abuses for which the whole country was crying out for redress.

Amongst the grievances most disliked were those of monopolies; and amongst the most detested of detestable patents was that for the exclusive manufacture of gold and silver lace. It had been conjointly granted to Sir Giles Mompesson, who is supposed to have been the original of Sir Giles Overreach, and to Sir Frances Michell, who is said to have suggested the character of Justice Greedy. Sir Giles was a Wiltshire knight, patronised by Buckingham; or, as it was the fashion of the day to speak, "a creature of the Favourite's;" and was concerned, not only in the patent of gold and silver lace, but in forming the monopolies styled the patents of "Inns and Osteries." In this affair Michell assisted him.⁴⁴

To render Bacon justice, he had formerly, when applied to with regard to these patents

⁴⁴ Nichols's Progresses, vol. iii., p. 297.

on behalf of Sir Christopher Villiers, advised Buckingham not to have anything to do with them.⁴⁵ He declared them to be one of the grievances which Parliament ought to put down; but avowed his readiness, should it not be done away with, "to mould it in the best manner, and help it forward."⁴⁶

The latter course was preferred by Buckingham, and was therefore adopted. The result was not only that the manufacture of gold and silver thread was adulterated, for that would have been a matter of comparatively little consequence, but that an inquisitorial jurisdiction was exercised by the patentees of the Inns and Ostersies, who were armed with as great powers as had ever been granted to the farmers of the revenue. The abuses which resulted cried for redress; and, during the session of 1620, Parliament took the matter up. It became the province of the Lord Keeper to interpose, and he decided that it should be settled with all convenient speed. "The meaning of this was," writes Lord Macaulay, "that certain of the house of Villiers were to go halves with certain of the house of Overreach and Greedy in the plunder of the public."

⁴⁵ *Biographia Britannica*, Art. Bacon, note.

⁴⁶ Bacon's Works, ii., p. 20.

Petitions were sent up to Parliament by persons who had suffered under these exactions, and the whole affair was thoroughly "ripped up."⁴⁷

The odium of these abuses fell upon Buckingham; the blame upon the Lord Keeper, who had not restrained these patents. Sir Edward Villiers, who was thought to be as "deep in the mire" as Mompesson and Michell, was sent on an embassy for safety. Mompesson was, on the third of March, 1621, summoned to appear before Parliament: he had fled, assisted, according to common report, by Buckingham, who dreaded further exposure, for Mompesson's neck was in danger. On the twenty-seventh of the same month, the King went to Parliament, and pronounced sentence on Sir Giles, the dignity of his wife remaining untainted.⁴⁸ Michell, a newly-made knight, was brought to his trial on the third of May, and suffered the singular sentence of degradation, with all "the ceremonies of abasement," "but that," observes Arthur Wilson, "being most proper to his nature, he was but eased of a burthen, his mind suffered not."⁴⁹ He was made incapable of holding office, fined 1,000*l.*, and ordered to be imprisoned in Finsbury Prison

⁴⁷ Oldmixon, p. 52.

⁴⁸ Nichols, iv., 660.

⁴⁹ Ibid, note.

during the King's pleasure. The ceremonial was rendered sufficiently effective, and Buckingham, with the highest persons of the realm, witnessed the process. The "old justice," as Michell was called, was brought by the Sheriffs of London to Westminster Hall, on the last day of Term, when the sentence of Parliament was read before him by a pursuivant, in an audible voice. His spurs were then broken in pieces by the servants of the Earl Marshal, and thrown away; the silver sword was taken from his side, broken over his head, and thrown away. Last of all, he was pronounced no longer a knight, but a knave; Garter, Clarencieux, Norroy sitting at the feet of the Commissioners.⁵⁰

Sir Giles Mompesson, meantime, having contrived to elude the sergeants who had him in charge, was safe abroad; but a proclamation was out against him. The Prince and Lords promised to do all they could to ensure his being apprehended: the ports were guarded. Buckingham, meantime, declared in the House that he had no hand in the matter, but that the blame rested with the referees who had tested the lawfulness of these patents.⁵¹ Sir Giles was heavily fined; an annuity of 200*l.* on the

⁵⁰ Nichols, vol. iv., p. 660.

⁵¹ State Papers, vol., cxx., No. 13.

new waterworks being all that was reserved for Lady Mompesson and her child.

Two years afterwards he was, however, allowed to return to England for three months, though under some risk; for the people did not forget that the two words, "no Empsons," formed his anagram, and he was only permitted to land in England on the petition of his wife.⁵²

With what sensations Buckingham, who had certainly regarded the peculation permitted by these patents as a family perquisite, must have witnessed these proceedings, it is not easy to say. His once generous character was gaining in hardness, and losing the traces of its delicacy and scrupulousness every day.

But evils of a more stupendous character were soon to be detected and avenged by a people who, Bacon truly said, "loved the law of their land." The Lord Keeper had reckoned for a long time that the protecting hand of the Favourite could cover his venial proceedings. On the twenty-seventh of January, 1620, he was created Viscount St. Albans, with plenary investiture. The Lord Carew carried his robe before him; the Marquis of Buckingham held it up. The prosperous Lord Keeper gave the King most hearty thanks for each successive step of his preferment.

⁵² State Papers, cxxii., No. 8.

1st, for making him his solicitor; 2nd, his attorney; 3rd, a privy councillor; 4th, Keeper of the Great Seal; 5th, chancellor; 6th, Baron Verulam; 7th, Viscount St. Albans;—honours and emoluments which had been procured for him entirely through the influence of Buckingham. The envious world wondered, according to Sir Symonds D'Ewes, at the gratification of Bacon's pride and ambition. His estates in land were thought, at that time, not to be more in value than four or five hundred pounds yearly; his debts were supposed to amount to 30,000*l*. He was then known to receive bribes in all cases of moment that came before him.⁵³ The hour of reckoning, however, eventually arrived.

The disgraceful transactions which brought this tardy justice on the man so pre-eminent in letters, so debased in honourable principle, had been a frequent source of complaint in parliament. Thus, as a modern writer observes, “was signally brought to the test the value of those objects for which Bacon had sullied his integrity, had resigned his independence, had violated the most sacred objects of friendship and gratitude, had flattered the worthless, had persecuted the innocent, had tampered with judges, had tortured prisoners, had plundered suitors, had wasted on

⁵³ Harl. MSS. 646—See Nichols, vol. iv., p. 649, note.

paltry intrigues the power of the most exquisitely constructed intellect that had ever been bestowed on any of the children of men.”⁵⁴ It is of no avail to say that the custom of the day authorized the receiving of bribes and presents; or to justify the mean subservience of the Lord Chancellor by blaming the interference of Buckingham. That interference may be justly censured; but it forms no ground of acquittal to Bacon.

In the letter of advice addressed by this most inconsistent man to Buckingham, when Sir George Villiers, he counsels him by no means ever to be persuaded to interpose himself, “either by word or letter, in any cause depending, or likely to be depending, in any court of justice, nor suffer any other great man to do it where he could hinder it, and by all means to dissuade the King from it.” “If it prevail,” he adds, “it prevents justice; but if the judge be so just, and of such courage, as he ought to be, as not to be inclined thereby, yet it always leaves a taint of suspicion behind it. Judges must be chaste as Cæsar’s wife—neither to be, nor to be suspected to be, unjust; and, sir, the honour of the judges in their judicature is the King’s honour, whose person they represent.”⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Macaulay.

⁵⁵ Advice to Sir George Villiers.

Shortly after Bacon had become Lord Keeper, a series of letters was, nevertheless, commenced on the part of Buckingham in favour of persons who were likely to come into chancery.⁵⁶ And it is related in Hacket's Life of the Lord Keeper Williams, the successor of Bacon, that there was not a cause of moment, but that, as soon as it came to publication, one of the parties concerned in it brought letters from this mighty peer and the Lord Keeper's patron.⁵⁷ A committee was appointed by the House of Commons to inquire into the proceedings of the courts of justice. Two charges of corruption were brought against the Lord Chancellor; the one in the case of a man named Aubrey, who had been advised to quicken a suit in chancery by the bribe of a hundred pounds. The money was presented, through the medium of Sir George Hastings, directly to the Lord Chancellor at his lodgings in Gray's Inn, and when Sir George came out from the chambers, he told Aubrey that his "Lordship was thankful, and assured him of good success in his business, which, however, he had not."⁵⁸ The other case

⁵⁶ Mr. Montagu's Life of Bacon, note.

⁵⁷ Bishop Hacket's Life of Williams.

⁵⁸ Biog. Brit. Art. Bacon.

was that of Mr. Egerton, who mortgaged his estate for four hundred pounds; a sum which Bacon at first refused, saying it was too much, but accepted at last. These charges were eventually preferred before the House of Lords, and when the complaint was made in that assembly, it devolved on Buckingham, in the absence of the Chancellor, who was sick, to present a letter praying for time for the privilege of cross-examining witnesses; and requesting that if there came up any more petitions of the same nature, their Lordships would not take any prejudice at their numbers, considering that they were against a judge that made two hundred and forty decrees in a year.⁵⁹ During this interval, Bacon was assured of the sympathy of James and the intercession of Buckingham. The King shed tears on hearing of his dilemma, and procured a recess of parliament, in order to give him time for defence. It was, however, judged best by the Chancellor, notwithstanding all this powerful patronage, not to attempt a defence, but to throw himself upon the mercy of the House. That, in spite of this confession, Bacon still continued to enjoy the protection of Buckingham, is evident, for the heir to the crown presented Bacon's memorable letter, full of eloquence, and expressed with the

⁵⁹ Biog. Brit, Art. Bacon.

inimitable address which he knew so well how to employ. This submission was not deemed enough; a full confession was required. It was given by one sunk in character and broken in spirit, and was received by the House. Prince Charles was then requested to intercede with His Majesty that he would sequester the Great Seal, to which James assented, declaring it was his resolution to fill up the place of Chancellor forthwith. Bacon was summoned before the House; he excused himself on the plea of sickness, and sentence was passed upon him in his absence. He was decreed to pay a fine of 40,000*l.*, to be imprisoned in the Tower during the King's pleasure, and declared incapable of ever either sitting in Parliament again, or of holding any office or employment; he was even forbidden to come within "the verge"—that is, within twelve miles of the Court.⁶⁰

The condition of Bacon's mind and body under this severe disgrace seems to have been truly melancholy. One moment he was merry, and declared that he believed he should be able to ride safely through the tempest. When passing through the hall of his stately abode at York House, on his servants rising at his presence, he said, "Sit down,

⁶⁰ Biog. Brit. Art. Bacon.

my friends; your rise has been my fall." Upon one of his friends observing, "You must look around you," he answered, "I look above me."

At other times his despair broke out in words that, although somewhat abject, were touching in the extreme. As he lay in his bed, his frame swoln with disease, he bade none of his gentlemen come near him, nor take any notice of him, but altogether to forget him, not hereafter to speak of him, nor remember that there was such a being in the world.

In this extremity of sorrow, Buckingham visited the fallen one. Already had Bacon written to him in the following terms:—"Your Lordship spoke of purgatory; I am now in it; but my mind is in a calm, for my fortune is not my felicity. I know I have clean hands, and a clean heart, and I hope a clean house for friends or servants. But Job himself, or whoever was the justest judge, by such hunting for matters against him as hath been used against me, may, for a time, seem foul, especially in a time when greatness is the mark, and accusation is the game. And if this be to be a Chancellor, I think, if the Great Seal lay upon Hounslow Heath, nobody would stoop to take it up." What marvellous self-deception, or consummate duplicity! Owing to Buckingham's mediation, a letter was given to the

King, from Bacon; in this he again asserted that innocence to which he had solemnly renounced all claim before, in his submission to Parliament.

“And now for the briberies and gifts wherewith I am charged; when the book of hearts shall be opened, I hope I shall not be found to have the troubled fountain of a corrupt heart, in a depraved habit of taking rewards to pervert justice, however I may be frail, and partake of the abuses of the times.”⁶¹

On the nineteenth of March, Bacon addressed a letter to the House of Lords, contending, he said, that charges of bribery were brought against him; he prayed that they would not prejudge him for absence, having been ill, and preparing for a higher tribunal; that they would give him leisure to make his defence, which would be plain and ingenuous; also, that they would not be prejudiced against him by the number of petitions brought against a man who gives two hundred decrees and orders a year, exclusive of causes. He did not, he said, desire to make greatness a subterfuge for guiltiness.⁶²

Notwithstanding a message from James to

⁶¹ Montagu's Life, p. 332:

⁶² State Papers, vol. cxx., No. 28.

Parliament, saying that he had refused the tender of the Great Seal from the Lord Chancellor, and hoped that they would give him a patient hearing, "but to judge him as they thought fit, if matters prove foul,"⁶³ Bacon was suspended. He wrote a pitiful, specious letter to the House of Lords, in which he "rejoiced that in the midst of his profound afflictions the greatness of a magistrate was no shelter for crime." His only justification, he said, was his non-concealment of his offences. He did not mean to reply to particular questions, nor cavil at witnesses, nor urge extenuations. He submitted to their judgment and mercy, but hoped that the loss of his soul might be sufficient expiation for his faults. He pleaded for compassion, by the example of the King's clemency, and their own fellow feeling for him.⁶⁴

Until the first of May, 1621, Bacon remained Lord Chancellor of England. On the afternoon of that day, the Lord Treasurer, Viscount Mandeville, the Duke of Lennox, Lord Steward of the King's Household, the Earl of Arundel, Earl Marshal of England, the Earl of Pembroke, and the Lord Chamberlain of the Household, repaired to York House. They were introduced into the presence of Bacon, and then told him "that

⁶³ State Papers, vol. cxx., No. 97.

⁶⁴ Ibid, No. 104.

they were sorry to visit him on such an occasion, and wished it had been better." "No, my lords," he replied, "the occasion is good." He then delivered to them the Great Seal, saying, as he gave it up, "It was the King's favour that gave me this, and it is my fault that he hath taken it away." The seal was conveyed to Whitehall, and restored to the King, who exclaimed, on receiving it, "Now, by my soul, I am pained at my heart where to bestow this; for, as for my lawyers, they are all knaves."⁶⁵ But Buckingham had provided against this difficulty, and the high office which Bacon had so greatly abused was bestowed upon Williams, Bishop of Lincoln, who was now the chief adviser of the Marquis, and to whose counsels much that had been done was attributed.

The choice of Williams, for this high office, reflected no discredit upon Buckingham. Bishop Goodman terms this prelate "a man of as great wit and understanding as ever I knew any man." "And truly," he adds, endeavouring to rebut Weldon's charge of a mean birth, "he was as well-descended and had as good kindred as any man in North Wales, none beyond him. He had a very quick apprehension, and for the discharge of the Lord Keeper's Office, he was never taxed with any insufficiency. I have heard

⁶⁵ Nichols, from Sir Symonds D'Ewes's Diary.

him make his reports in the Lord's House of Parliament, and answer such petitions, that in truth we did wonderfully commend him." ⁶⁶ To these essentials Williams added the popular qualities of hospitality and liberality; in this respect he resembled Laud. "There was not a man in England," says Bishop Goodman, "that kept a more orderly house than Laud did, or bred up his servants better. But I will join these two celebrities together for the great hospitality which they kept, inviting and entertaining strangers." With regard to liberality, the erection of St. John's College, Cambridge, the foundation there of several scholarships and fellowships, the library at Westminster, the library at Lincoln, the repairs of Westminster Abbey, and the care which Williams took, even when he was Lord Keeper, of the young scholars at Westminster, sufficiently attest his great and salutary views.

Whilst he was Proctor at Cambridge, he conducted a magnificent entertainment, given to the Lord Chancellor Egerton, and to the Spanish ambassadors, on which occasion Egerton told him that he "was fit to serve a king," and afterwards introduced him at court.⁶⁷

The chief circumstance that brought Williams

⁶⁶ Goodman's Life, i., p. 285.

⁶⁷ Grainger, chap. iv., t. 1.

into notice was his figuring at Cambridge in a disputation, before Prince Charles, in 1612-13,⁶⁸ when he was made a Bachelor of Divinity by special grace, in order that he might become a disputant in the Theological Controversy.⁶⁹

Still, great subserviency was expected even from the Lord Keeper in those days of despotic rule. The industrious letter writer, John Chamberlain, who supplies us with all the gossip and news which, in those days, had no outlet in the public press, writes of this new appointment in these terms :—

“The King has made the Dean of Westminster Lord Keeper for a year and a half; if he behave well, he is to retain office for a year and a half longer, and then to surrender it: he is to consult one of the Chief Justices in all cases of importance.”⁷⁰

He quietly adds, immediately afterwards, that the Bishop of Bangor had been sent to the Fleet for disputing “malapertly” with the King on the Sabbath; and that Dr. Price had shared the same punishment for his sermon at Oatlands. The “Prevaricator” of Cambridge was expelled

⁶⁸ Nichols, vol. iii., p. 589.

⁶⁹ Ibid, vol. ii., Appendix.

⁷⁰ Chamberlain to Carleton.—State Papers, vol. cxxiii., No. 23.

the University for saying, at a banquet that he gave, that he would have all sorts of instruments except Gondomar's pipe.⁷¹ The Lord Keeper's "good behaviour," therefore, meant an absolute subjection of reason and understanding; and, more especially, an entire adherence to that line of politics which might happen to be agreeable at the time to the King.

The Great Seal, when it had been fetched from the miserable Bacon, was delivered by the King, in presence of the Prince and the Privy Council, to Williams, and was received with a short speech, "marvelling at His Majesty's benignity," and promising to be pastor of the sheep. In his first speech in the Court of Chancery, the Lord Keeper vindicated the principle on which the King had determined to fill up the post with one who was not a lawyer.⁷²

A few months before Buckingham, who, as "Steward of the City and College of Westminster," was patron of the Deanery, had made the young disputant Dean of Westminster. Williams, nevertheless, abstained from paying any court to the Favourite; his pride and honesty kept him aloof. "For he had observed," says Bishop Hacket, "that the Marquis was very apt suddenly

⁷¹ Chamberlain to Carleton, State Papers, vol. cxxii., No. 23.

⁷² State Papers, vol. cxiii., No. 18.

to look cloudy upon his creatures, as if he had raised them up on purpose to cast them down." One day, however, whilst the Dean was attending upon King James, in the absence of the Marquis, the Monarch suddenly inquired, without any relation to the previous discourse, "when he was at Buckingham?" "Sir," replied Williams, "I have had no business to go to his lordship." "But," rejoined the King, "you must go to him about my business," and Williams accordingly sought an interview with the Marquis. The Favourite and the Dean were thus brought into contact, and the result was favourable to both. To Buckingham it procured an able and, for the time, a zealous friend, to whom he owed the great service which Williams afterwards performed in converting Lady Katherine Manners from Popery; and Williams obtained, for his part, a munificent and deserving patron. A different version of the causes of Williams's elevation was given by a scandalous historian. According to Sir Anthony Weldon, it was owing to the hopes which the Countess of Buckingham entertained of becoming, in her third nuptials, the wife of Williams, who is said to have "thought otherwise of that marriage when he was Lord Keeper Williams, than he had done as Dean of Westminster,"⁷³ "which," he adds,

⁷³ Oldmixon, 53.

“was the cause of his downfall.” But this report was wholly without foundation. “Williams was generally beloved by his neighbours,” says Bishop Goodman, “and for that report, that he should be great with Buckingham’s mother, it is an idle, foolish report, without any colour of truth.”⁷⁴ His appointment as Lord Keeper gave, however, great offence to the members of the bar. It was loudly resented that the highest post in the law should be bestowed upon a doctor of divinity; and this step was, it was supposed, preparatory to filling all the courts of judicature with churchmen. Williams, nevertheless, proved himself to be admirably adapted for the office. He had already gained general confidence by persuading the King to suffer Parliament to sit, and to go on, in opposition to those who, being afraid of exposure, had endeavoured to prejudice Buckingham and his royal master against that assembly.⁷⁵ As a chancellor, he was acknowledged, even by the most distrustful, to be a faithful counsellor; and by the friendship and instruction of the Lord Chancellor, Egerton, to whom he had been domestic chaplain, he had been prepared for the great duties of his legal office. Egerton, on his death, had addressed to Williams these words:—“If you want money, I will leave

⁷⁴ Goodman, vol. i., p. 286.

⁷⁵ Note to Biog. Brit. Art. Bacon.

you such a legacy as shall furnish you to begin the world like a gentleman. I know," he added, "you are an expert workmen. Take these tools to broach with : they are the best I have." He then gave him some books and papers, which he had written with his own hand, being directions concerning the regulation of the High Court of Parliament, the Court of Chancery, and the Star Chamber, for the dying Chancellor foresaw that his chaplain might, in the course of his career, require such materials.⁷⁶

The promotion of Williams involved very important consequences to the English Church. It was by his instrumentality that Bishop Laud was first brought forward at the Court of James.

Williams foresaw the rise of that eminent and unfortunate man, but few persons could have predicted his fall.

An accidental circumstance drew upon Laud the attention which his learning, his zeal, and his ardent piety, tainted as it was by bigotry, might not have procured him. Bishops, and even archbishops, in those days, were, as we have seen, by no means restricted from the diversions of the hunting-field, nor even, if occasion occurred, from martial exploits. Archbishop Abbot, among the

⁷⁶ Oldmixon, p. 53.

rest, had been a jovial huntsman. The practice was, it is true, forbidden by the canons of the church, but those had not been admitted by the law of the land. There was a high and violent party in the church, who were eager that Abbot should be deprived of his ecclesiastical dignities, on account of the accident in which he shot a keeper, a mishap which the worst construction could only render into justifiable homicide. Laud was amongst the most vehement of these, and his views of the case were so rigid, that he did not consider the orders which Archbishop Abbot conferred afterwards to be valid. There were others who judged differently, and amongst the rest, the justly celebrated Lancelot Andrews, who maintained that since Bishop Juxon was famous for breeding the best dogs in England, and was yet worthy to be promoted to a see, Abbot was excusable.

But the resistance of Laud was agreeable to Buckingham, who already had constituted himself his patron. By his influence, Williams was induced to get Laud made Bishop of St. David's, and Laud afterwards acknowledged that and other obligations by exclaiming, "My life will be too short to repay his Lordship's goodness." Yet he lived to change his opinion.

The rise of Laud at Court may be traced by distinct steps. In 1621-2, we find him preaching

at Court, on the day of the King's accession,⁷⁷ and "commanded to print."⁷⁸ Shortly afterwards the King sent to Laud, to converse with him about the Countess of Buckingham, who was wavering on the subject of her faith. Several interviews succeeded, and in consequence, it may be presumed, of Laud's exertions in that cause, he became chaplain to the Marquis of Buckingham. For a time, his efforts at conversion appear to have been crowned with success. The Countess consented to receive the sacrament in the King's chapel, and received a present, according to common report, of 2,000*l.* for her conformity.⁷⁹ Sometimes religious discussions took place before His Majesty, and on one occasion, the answer of Laud to the nine articles, delivered in a book from Fisher, the Jesuit, was read and argued upon at Windsor, in the presence of James, his son, Buckingham, his mother, and his lady. These endeavours proved futile ; the Countess became eventually confirmed in the Church of Rome, and retreated to her house at Goadby, to enjoy the exercise of her persuasion, undisturbed by the observations of the world. Hitherto, she had been one of the most brilliant

⁷⁷ March 24th.

⁷⁸ Nichols, vol. iv., p. 754.

⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 769.

leaders of fashion ; her retirement from the Court was therefore the theme of much remark. Her compliance with the King's wishes in receiving the Holy Communion was said to have been prompted by her dread of banishment from that sphere in which she had figured.⁸⁰ It was during the following year that she relapsed to Popery, and after she was, as Mr. Chamberlain declared, *sent* from Court, either on that account, or perhaps on account of a quarrel with her daughter-in-law.⁸¹

Whatsoever may have been the reason for the retirement of this ambitious woman, one may easily imagine with what mingled emotions of chagrin and triumph she returned to the scene of her early married life ; her sons, already great, were ennobled, and influential ; her title and fortune formed a striking contrast between the all-powerful mother of a royal favourite, and the lowly serving maid in the household of an obscure Leicestershire country gentleman ; yet there were, as it so appears, clouds overshadowing even the brightness of her destiny, and darkening, eventually, the close of her singularly prosperous career.

⁸⁰ State Papers, vol. cxxxi., No. 24.

⁸¹ Ibid, vol. cxxxiii., No. 24.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SPANISH TREATY—NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE DUKE OF LERMA AND LORD DIGBY — THE INFANTA DESCRIBED BY LORD DIGBY—HER GREAT BEAUTY, PIETY, AND SWEETNESS—THE DESCRIPTION OF HER BY TOBY MATHEW—SHE IS DISPOSED TO RECEIVE CHARLES'S ADDRESSES — GONDOMAR — ATTENTIONS SHOWN TO HIM IN ENGLAND—ELY HOUSE ALLOTTED FOR HIS RECEPTION—JEALOUSY OF THE PROTESTANTS AT THE FAVOUR SHOWN HIM—FIRST NOTION OF CHARLES'S JOURNEY TO SPAIN SUGGESTED BY BUCKINGHAM—HIS ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF IT—OBSTACLES TO THE PRINCE'S MARRIAGE WITH THE INFANTA—BUCKINGHAM'S DEBTS AND DIFFICULTIES—INTERVIEW BETWEEN GONDOMAR AND THE DUKE OF LENNOX—JOURNEY OF CHARLES AND BUCKINGHAM INTO SPAIN—THEY STOP IN PARIS—LOUIS XIII.—ANNE OF AUSTRIA—HENRIETTA MARIA—THEY PROCEED TO MADRID — RECEPTION THERE — ENTRANCE IN STATE INTO THAT CITY—COUNTESS OF PHILIP IV.—FESTIVITIES IN HONOUR OF THE PRINCE—THE KING'S LETTERS TO HIM.

CHAPTER VII.

1622.

IN the midst of all the difficulties and differences of opinion which embarrassed the question of assisting the Palatinate, or of leaving the darling of her country, Elizabeth of Bohemia, to her fate, that cherished project, known at the time as the Spanish treaty, was brought under consideration.

Little more than two years had elapsed after the death of James's first-born, Prince Henry,⁸² when the Duke of Lerma, the minister of Philip the Third of Spain, opened a negotiation with Digby, then ambassador at Madrid, the object of which was to arrange a marriage between Prince Charles and Donna Maria. This princess was the sister of Philip the Fourth of Spain, and her elder sister being married, was styled the Infanta.

In June, 1622, Charles wrote to Lord Digby, de-

⁸² Hacket's *Life of Williams*, p. 114.

siring to hear speedily upon the subject which the young prince had nearest his heart — whether the King of Spain were really affected to the marriage or not, and intended to proceed in it; in which case, Digby's instructions were to perfect all the capitulations, and to agree that the journey of the Infanta to England should take place during the ensuing spring.⁸³

Lord Digby, as he now informed Charles, had first availed himself of all the secret means he could devise, of discovering the wishes of his Spanish Majesty; and on conversing with his ministers afterwards, had received from them every possible encouragement. In the long and interesting letter in which he replied to the young Prince's inquiries, Digby described an interview with the Infanta, to whom he begged to address himself in the name of her young and royal suitor, and to deliver to her a message. The King gave him permission to see the Infanta, and with his own lips to enter on the subject; Digby having represented to that Monarch, that Charles, being now twenty-one years of age, was desirous of bringing matters to a conclusion, and that His Majesty, King James, having but one son, was anxious "not to delay longer the bestowing of him."

⁸³ Letter from Lord Digby to Charles, dated Madrid, 30th June, 1622.—Inedited State Papers.

The King of Spain, in return, assured his British Majesty that there was no less affection to the match in him, than there had been in his father. "I can frame," writes Digby to the Prince, "no opinion but upon these exterior things, and men that do negotiate with great princes must rely upon the honour and truth of their words and propositions, especially in a case of this nature."⁸⁴ Much was expected from the return of Count Gondomar from England to Spain; his coming was, as Digby declared, to be of great use, "for he holds," adds that nobleman, "great credit here, and will be able to clear away all difficulties, being extremely affectionate to the business." Gondomar, it appears, had then already landed at Bayonne.

Digby next expatiated at length upon the perfection of the Infanta. This princess appears to have presented a rare instance of great personal attraction, combined with sweetness of disposition, sensibility, and piety. That she was not eventually united to Charles must, in spite of the calculations of politicians, ever be a subject of regret. Her good sense might have acted beneficially upon the well-intentioned but mistaken Monarch, who was fatally swayed by the counsels of Henrietta Maria.

⁸⁴ Letter from Lord Digby to Charles, dated Madrid, 30th June, 1622.—Inedited State Papers.

Lord Digby, experienced in courts, thus expressed himself with regard to Donna Maria.

“For the person of the Infanta, this much :—I will presume to say unto your highness, that I have seen many ladies attending when I had my audience with the Queen and Infanta, but she is by much the handsomest young lady I saw since I came into Spain ; and for her goodness and sweetness of her disposition, she is by the whole Court generally commended.”

In subsequent letters, Lord Digby was still more explicit, although he knew, he said, that expectations generally exceed reality ; yet should the Prince, on seeing the Infanta, not “judge her to be a beautiful and dainty lady, he shall be single in his opinions and from all who have ever seen her.⁸⁵”

These praises of Lord Digby’s are borne out by other testimonies ; that, more especially, of Toby Mathew, who followed the Prince into Spain, and who calls the Infanta, then in her eighteenth year, as “fair in all perfection ;” her face without one “ill feature,” presenting that contour which “shews her to be highly born.” The expression of her countenance peculiarly sweet ; and her figure, concealed as it was by the close

⁸⁵ Dated Madrid, February 22, 1622-23.—Inedited State Papers.

ruffs and cuffs then worn by the Spanish ladies, was declared to be perfect; her head was well set upon her neck; and so," adds the minute observer, "are her hands to her arms; and they say that before she is dressed, she is incomparably better than after."⁸⁶

Lord Digby protested also to Charles that his future bride, as she was then esteemed, had "the fairest hand that he had ever seen, that she was very straight and well-bodied, and a likely lady to make the Prince happy."

This portraiture was calculated to increase the ardour of the thoughtful and enthusiastic Charles; whilst the character drawn of the Infanta tended to raise the sentiment of admiration into one of respect. Brought up, as Lord Digby relates, with great care, and in retirement, there might be more gravity and reserve than were usual in English ladies, in her deportment; but this was a "fault easy mended." Having asked every possible question of her childhood and youth, the ambassador protested that "never heard he so much good of any one as of the Infanta." To this testimony may be again added that of Toby Mathew, who portrays her so free from pride and worldliness, "that she seemed to

⁸⁶ Description of the Infanta of Spain, by Toby Mathew. Dated June, 28, 1623.—Inedited State Papers.

shine from her soul through her body ;” the beauty of her mind very far exceeding that of her person. Everyday this young Princess passed in prayer three or four hours, and then occupied herself in making something which might be sold for the benefit of the sick and wounded in the hospitals, or busied herself in drawing lint out of linen for their use. She spent, in her charities, a hundred pounds a month, appropriating what was allowed her for recreation to these good deeds. Each returning Wednesday and Saturday found her in the confessional, or communicating, “for she carrieth,” relates Toby Mathew, “in particular, a most tender devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, and the Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Lady.” This deep sense of her responsibilities, this earnest piety, alarmed the English Puritans, who forgot that whilst no one was more steadfast to her faith than Katharine of Arragon, there existed not a more tolerant being, as far as we have the means of judging, nor sat upon the throne of the Queen’s-Consort of England, one more beloved by all sects and classes of the people than that ill-used and ill-fated foreigner. They remembered, perhaps, that whilst the Romish persuasion acted benignantly on her mind, on that of her daughter it engendered bigotry, and caused persecution.

Professing this earnest piety, Donna Maria appears also to have been free from the imprudence of giddy coquetry, to which her sister, Anne of Austria, was prone. "She was of few words, but free and affable with her ladies," and though at first sight she gave no indications of quickness of mind, those who knew her well respected her judgment, while they admired that freedom from personal vanity, so rare in the young and flattered. "Of her person, and beauty, and dressing," writes Toby Mathew, "she is careless, and takes what they bring her without much ado." Her courage and calmness under trying circumstances were also commended—the annalist thought it worth while to specify that "thunder and lightning affrighted her not," "and when, at Aranjuez, the Queen had made a public entertainment for the King, and the scaffolding fell, and boughs fell in and caught fire, and all the company fled, Donna Maria remained calm and collected, only calling for the Condé di Olivarez to keep her from the crushing of the people: retiring at her usual pace, without any sign of agitation. This happened when she was only sixteen years of age.

Between the Infanta and her royal brother, Philip IV., the greatest affection subsisted. Not a morning passed that he did not visit her in her apart-

ments, and wait whilst she prepared to go abroad. Yet, in spite of this partiality, she made a point of never interfering in public business. In one respect she resembled Katharine of Arragon; although deeply sensible of any unkindness, she was one who would never expostulate with the unkind, but grieved in secret. Here was true heroism: the power to suffer, the wisdom to forbear: the greatness of mind, not, in family disputes, to challenge sympathy, is a quality of inestimable importance, both in private and public life.

A portion only of the careful eulogium passed on the Infanta reached Charles, whilst he was as yet contemplating a journey to see the rare being upon whom his hopes of felicity were placed: but a description was sent by Digby of the interview which took place between him and the Infanta. "After I had secluded her from His Majesty," wrote the ambassador, "I told her that I had likewise a message to deliver her, with her permission, from another cavalier, the Prince of Wales. She blushed, and told me, 'I might;' whereupon" Digby said, "that in regard to the desire which King James had to unite these kingdoms in nearer friendship, by way of marriage, there was nothing the Prince had so much at heart." "So you hoped," he added, addressing Charles, "it was agreeable unto her, and that

she likewise wished well, and would aid in the effecting of it."

At this interrogation the Infanta "blushed extremely, and asked particularly of the Prince's health, and how," adds Digby, "I had left you; and told me she gave me great thanks for the favour you did her. I will set down the very words in Spanish, for I think your Highness should be angry with me for the omission of any word in this particular:—'Agradesco mucho al Principe de Inglaterra, la merced que me hazo.'"

Lord Digby inclosed also letters in Spanish, addressed to Charles. The Infanta having heard that her suitor was studying her native language spoke to Digby on the subject. "He doth it," was the reply, "whereby to use with you a style of more familiarity."⁸⁷

These particulars are interesting, as proving that it was not without some inquiry and deliberation that Charles undertook to procure, in person, a knowledge of the young Princess to whom his hand was destined.

The Condé de Gondomar, one of the most astute diplomatists of his time, had now been accredited to England for the last three years. His object in coming was to give satisfaction to the

⁸⁷ Letter of Lord Digby, before quoted.

King and Court on the subject of the marriage, but the feeling of the people was against him. It was his arrival that had precipitated the fall of Raleigh. It was from his influence that any toleration to the oppressed Catholics would be dated.

Ely House, once the residence of the Bishop of Ely, but given by Queen Elizabeth to her favourite, Hatton, was the tenement destined to receive the ambassadors of Spain; although the envoys from the Palatinate were then in England, and "no one knew," as it was said, "how two buckets could go down into the well at once."⁸⁸ But it was soon seen which "bucket was to go down;" for, whilst he was waiting in expectation of Gondomar's arrival, James had coldly dismissed Baron Dona, the Prince Palatine's envoy, saying that he disapproved of his son-in-law's selection to the throne of Bohemia as factious; and refusing to embark his subjects, "who were as dear to him as his children," in a war. This indifference to his daughter's condition, and the outrage offered to public opinion in allowing mass to be celebrated in what had once been the private chapel of the Bishop of Ely, scandalized all staunch Protestants, and Gondomar was constrained to open a back door in Ely House to let in Catholics to worship. Never-

⁸⁸ Letter from Dr. Joseph Hall to Carleton.

theless, the virago, Lady Hatton, who lived almost next door to the Spaniard, threw every hindrance in her power in the way of that arrangement; yet, in the very face of honest Protestant scruples, the Ladies of the Court were invited to witness the ceremonies at Ely House; and, doubtless, found it not inconsistent with their conscience to comply.⁸⁹

It was at this juncture that Buckingham is said first to have proposed to Charles to evade open censure by making a journey, incognito, to Spain. Nor were such expeditions unknown in those times. Buckingham well knew, in this instance, the tone of argument most appropriate to address to a prince whose blameless career, untainted by dissipation, had not seared one of the best safeguards of youth—romance. The Prince was accessible to the influence of that which Mackenzie calls “a higher sense of virtue.” A lover of the refined and beautiful, he shrank from the notion of a mere political union; the suggestions which were thrown out from motives of Statecraft were received in a spirit of trust and hope, and sank instantly into a mind of delicacy and feeling.

Buckingham drew a picture, it is stated, of a marriage contracted on public grounds alone. He

⁸⁹ State Papers, vol. cxxviii., p. 96.

pointed out the miseries of such an alliance ; he referred to the indifference, if not loathing, with which a bride so selected would view the object, not of her own choice, but of that of the State, for reasons with which she had no sympathy.

He portrayed the misery of one who could deem herself nothing but a victim, and who could not fail to view with disgust a bond which brought her from a beloved home to a foreign court, where every early enjoyment of her youth must be forgotten, every cherished association and remembrance abandoned.

Buckingham found an attentive auditor. He represented to Charles that by accomplishing a journey to Madrid, and seeking an interview with his promised bride, he might create an interest in her affections, and, by the attentions of a lover, gain even the coldest heart. The delicacy of the compliment would be felt also in the Court of Madrid ; it would resemble the fictions in which the Spaniards delighted ; it would present him to the young Princess under the aspect of a devoted suitor ; it would expedite the conclusion of those negotiations concerning the Palatinate which had languished so long. These representations were heightened by Murray, the Prince's tutor, who, some insinuated, was instigated by the cunning Gon-

domar.⁹⁰ Murray reminded his royal pupil that his father had gone to Denmark to fetch his wife; that his grandfather, "living in the heart of England," went into Scotland to marry: especially that his great grandfather, James V., went into France several times—first, to woo the daughter of the French King, the Lady Mary of Lorraine: that interviews between kings and princes were customary; and that no occasion could be so suitable as a negotiation of marriage. "God," added Murray, "had blessed the Prince with an able body, fit for any exercise and recreation: with great intellectuals, fit to enter into any treaty himself; God had blessed him with a civil carriage, mild and temperate — no way passionate, as some princes were;" and thus, being fitted for the enterprise, the sagacious Scot thought that a journey would improve the Prince's abilities, and exhibit them to the world.⁹¹

The Court, watchful of what was passing, could only guess by certain indications of the probability of the projected journey into Spain taking effect. About nine weeks previous to the commencement of

⁹⁰ This affair, as Mr. Brewer observes, "was something of a counterpart to his son's knight-errantry."—Bishop Goodman's Life, note, vol. i., p. 363.

⁹¹ Bishop Goodman, vol. i., p. 364.

the Spanish journey, Charles was observed to hold a long conference in his royal father's bedchamber. The door was closed; but the Prince opened and closed it at times; as if he were looking into the adjoining ante-chamber to see if there was anybody there who could listen to what was going on. James, in the course of that interview, broke into loud cries of passion. About a month afterwards, a report ran through the Court that Buckingham was to go to Spain on a solemn embassy. This rumour, however, was set afloat merely that it might be discovered how the people stood affected to the Spanish marriage. A dispensation from the Pope was necessary as a preparatory step; and James was heard to lament that he could not match his heir without a dispensation from his enemy, which would be acknowledging the Papal power. Yet he took every means to compass the marriage treaty; and even Dr. Hakluyt, one of Prince Charles's chaplains, who had circulated a pamphlet against the Spanish marriage, was sent away from Court. Still there were innumerable difficulties in the way of negotiation. It appears, indeed, from various petitions, that, though Popery was considered to be on the increase in England, the recusants founded their strongest hopes on the Spanish match. In December, 1621, a petition had been

presented to the King, complaining of the printing of Papistical books, the "swarming in of Jesuits," and purposing to obviate the impending evils—first, by helping the King of Bohemia, then by marrying the Prince to one of his own religion.⁹² The King replied, saying that he had heard that his detention from Parliament, from ill health, "had led some fiery spirits to meddle with matters far beyond their capacity, and intrenching on the prerogative." He forbade any further meddling with state mysteries: such as the Prince's match, or attacks on the King of Spain; he resolved to punish all insolence in Parliament; and would not deign to hear or to answer the proposed petition, if it touched on the points forbidden. "He would," he graciously added, "make this a session, if good laws be devised." To this extraordinary answer, which was not published in the journals,⁹³ the commons returned a firm but respectful rejoinder; but were shortly advised that the King was pledged to the Spanish match, and blamed their interfering with it at all.⁹⁴

So great were the impediments to the Spanish treaty, that, since it seemed difficult to brave

⁹² State Papers, vol. cxxiv., No. 3.

⁹³ Ibid, No. 8.

⁹⁴ Ibid, No. 27.

opinion, a means was resorted to of evading any outbreak of the growing national discontent.

Meantime, about this juncture, the first intimation appears of the difficulties into which the extravagance of Buckingham had plunged him. Facts stated by the Court Chronicle speak for themselves. Lord Mandeville, then Lord President, had, it appears, lent him ten thousand pounds. In compliance with the venal spirit of the day, the promise of a payment was made contingent on Lord Mandeville's consent to the marriage of his eldest son with Mistress Susan Hill, a relation of Buckingham's, and probably an humble relation, since he gave the bride not only 10,000*l.*, which was to be considered as discharging his debt, but also promised to promote the Lord President, and to give him ten dishes at court. It was rumoured that Buckingham even promised an additional sum of 5,000*l.* to Mandeville. The marriage seems to have been hastened, in order that it might take place before the Prince's secret journey into Spain, for it was performed in the presence of the King, who was ill, and in bed, but who showed his delight at the nuptials by blessing the bride with one of his shoes. The match was said to have been an indifferent one for the bridegroom, who could have had 25,000*l.* with Lord Craven's daughter.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ State Papers, vol. cxxxviii., No. 23.

The next affair which produced many days of wonder was the Prince's journey, a project which had been broached, early in the course of his diplomatic negotiations, by Gondomar.

He had already sought an interview with the most esteemed personal friend of the King's, Ludowick, Duke of Richmond and Lennox, a kinsman of the Monarch's.⁹⁶

On this occasion, after many compliments on both sides had been exchanged, the Duke said very earnestly to the ambassador, "My lord, I pray deal plainly with me, shall we have a match or no?" To this inquiry, Gondomar replied that the King did his master great wrong if he doubted his intention, since he had already gone so far in the business; and where," adds the crafty Spaniard, "would my master in all Christendom match his daughter to greater advantage, either to a greater prince, or one who may be more helpful or needful to him, or with whom he should hold more correspondence than with the heir to the English crown?" He stated, nevertheless, certain objections: the danger there would be to the Infanta of incurring the penalties of recusancy, for it was then death for a priest to say mass in England.⁹⁷ Tolera-

⁹⁶ This nobleman died suddenly in 1623, universally respected.—Grainger's *Peers of James I.*, chap. ii.

⁹⁷ *Life of Bishop Goodman*, vol. i., p. 36.

tion must, therefore, be one stipulation of the treaty. A million of money was to be bestowed upon the young princess for her dowry; but before this was given, a certainty must be obtained that the marriage would prove a source of amity, instead of disunion. These points being decided, the treaty would be concluded. The Duke of Lennox, on hearing these proposals, decided in his own mind that the marriage ought never to take place, for that it could not stand with the laws and safety of this kingdom to permit a toleration of religion.⁹⁸

The journey of the young prince was, meantime, retarded by the reluctance of the King. James justly considered that continental nations might impugn his natural affection, as well as his judgment, in permitting the heir-apparent to quit the kingdom, and to leave his royal father childless, for Elizabeth of Bohemia had taken refuge in the Dutch states, and had not then looked to England as her exile. He considered the danger, writes a contemporary historian, "himself being now aged, if he should die, what then might befall his children."⁹⁹ How little could he foresee the extremities to which his princely son, then the idol of the nation, would be hereafter reduced, owing partly to the false system and erron-

⁹⁸ Life of Bishop Goodman, vol. i., p. 36.

⁹⁹ Goodman.

eous notions implanted within his mind at this all important season of his youth. The greatest peril that James feared, was the journey through France, at that time full of straggling soldiers, several armies having been recently disbanded. But it was argued by the eager advocates of the Spanish journey, that in France, although highway robberies were frequent, banditti in multitudes were rare. The Prince was to travel with a numerous retinue, he was to keep to the main roads, and there would be no fear of robbery or violence. Persuaded at length by these arguments, the King gave way upon a Monday, the seventeenth of February, 1622-23. He went to Newmarket; "there," writes Sir Robert Carey, the Prince's chamberlain, "the Prince appointed myself and the rest of his servants to meet him two days after. But the first news we heard was that the Prince and my Lord Duke were gone to Spain. This made a great hubbub in our Court, and in all England besides."

It was at first hoped that the Prince had gone anywhere but to Spain, "but those who so believed," had, it was said, no ground but desire.¹ The truth was soon circulated.

¹ Letter from Mr. Meade to Sir Martin Stuteville.—Ellis's *Letters Illustrative of English History*, vol. iii., 1st series, p. 216.

There had, it appears, been a formal leave-taking between the Prince and his father, and this scene was witnessed by the able shipwright, Phineas Pette.

Phineas had been in the service of Prince Henry, and had constructed a small vessel for the amusement of that royal youth, and he was now permitted to be present at the leave-taking between Charles, or, as his father styled him, "Babie," and the King. "At their taking horse," he related, "I kissed both their hands, and they only gave me an item to that I should shortly go to sea in the *Prince*."²

The King, after making some stipulations as to the day of the return of his precious travellers, parted from them composedly; "he did then," says Goodman, "express no passion at all, for he was an excellent master of his own affections, if you would give him a little respite, and not take him suddenly. He carried himself as though there were no such thing intended, and so he took his journey through Kingston and Newmarket."

"For want of better matter," writes Mr. Chamberlain, "I send you here certain verses made upon Jack and Tom's journey (for the Prince and Lord Marquis went through Kent

² Nichols, vol. i., p. 807.

under the names of Jack and Tom Smith). They were fathered at first upon the Prince, but, I hear, were only corrected and amended by him.”³

“They wore fair riding coats,” he continues, “and false beards, one of which fell off before they arrived at Gravesend, and caused suspicion.” Messengers were therefore sent after the fugitives; and they were overtaken near Sittingbourne, where one of their horses failed; they were detained at Canterbury, but got away; but were again stopped at Dover by order of the Privy Council, where they gave some “secret satisfaction” to the authorities of that port.

This enterprise, so consistent with Charles’s character, so agreeable to Buckingham’s high spirits, had not been made known to the Privy Council.

The King sent a message to them to say it was the Prince’s doing, and not that of Buckingham; and that the Council was not told of the scheme because “secrecy was the soul of the business.” The Council was ordered to “stay,” by a proclamation, the “amazement of the people,” who began to conclude that the

³ Inedited State Papers, Domestic. March 8. 1623.

Prince would be married "at a mass." It appears, however, without any doubt, that the whole was a plot of James's; for the Treasurer of the Household, Lord Brooke, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Heriot the jeweller, and others, had been commanded by His Majesty, when he was at Newmarket, to go to the Tower and select some fine jewels, suitable to wear in hats, and "the best rope of pearls," and some fine jewels, fit for a woman, for His Majesty to choose, which he will send abroad. They were not all for presents, but some to be lent to the Prince, and restored on his return home."⁴ Buckingham, we hear from the same authority, took Sir Paul Pindar's great diamonds, promising "to talk with him about paying for them."

A more detailed account of the commencement of this singular journey than the preceding may, however, be collected from other services.

The travellers slept one night at Newhall; on the following day⁵ they were accompanied by Sir Richard Graham, Master of the Marquis's Horse, and his own earliest friend, adviser, and confidant.⁶ They set off with a very small reti-

⁴ State Papers, vol. cxxxix., No. 16.

⁵ Feb. 18th.

⁶ Reliquiæ Wottonianæ.

nue, some of which they dismissed at various places, upon some idle pretence or another, but only to get rid of them. Thus they proceeded towards Gravesend; but, on crossing the river, a difficulty occurred. They had no small pieces of silver about them; and for want of them, were obliged to give the boatman, who rowed them across, a piece of twenty-two shillings; which, as Sir Henry Wotton relates, "struck the poor fellow into such melting tenderness, that so good gentlemen should be going (for so he suspected) about some quarrel beyond seas," that he thought it right to acquaint the officers of the town with his suspicions. A message was instantly despatched to detain the travellers at Rochester; but they had passed through the city before it arrived.

The peril of discovery had not yet passed. As the Prince and his companion ascended the hill above Rochester, they beheld, to their great consternation, the equipage of the French ambassador, attended by one of the royal carriages, approaching them in state. "This," says Wotton, "made them baulk the beaten road, and teach post hackneys to leap hedges." It seemed, however," says the same writer, "as if a voice had run before them; for at Canterbury, as they were preparing to take fresh horses, the Mayor of the

town came up, and declared, with very little ceremony, first, that he had an order from the Privy Council to arrest them; next, on finding them incredulous, from Sir Lewis Lewknors, Master of the Ceremonies; and, thirdly, from Sir Richard Mainwaring, then Lieutenant of Dover Castle. Buckingham had no leisure "to laugh" at this occurrence; but, taking off his disguise, he told the Mayor that he was going "covertly with such slight company," to take a survey of the fleet of the narrow seas, which was then in preparation. Thus, this obstacle was with some difficulty overcome; but the disguise still puzzled the worthy man in office. The travellers journeyed onwards, but met with a fresh recognition from the boy who carried their baggage, and who had been at Court, and had a suspicion who the party were; but it was not difficult to ensure his silence. Owing to bad horses, and these hindrances, it was six in the evening before the party reached Dover.

Here they met the two gentlemen who were alone in their confidence. One of them was Sir Francis Cottington, who was selected not only for his intimate knowledge of Prince Charles's affairs, but from his acquaintance with the Spanish Court, "where he had," says Sir Henry Wotton, 'gotten singular credit, even with that cautious

nation, by the temper of his carriage." He was, indeed, a prudent man, well acquainted with business, and conversant with Spanish and French. He had been created a baronet only two days before this journey, his family holding a respectable rank at Godmanstown, Somersetshire.

At his first entrance into the world, Cottington had only fulfilled the post of Gentleman of the Horse to Sir Philip Stafford, Vice-Chamberlain to Queen Elizabeth; but he was afterwards attached to the embassy in Spain, and in 1621, was made secretary to Prince Charles. He was considered to know the politics of the Spanish Court "to a hair." Charles, in spite of the jealousy afterwards manifested by Buckingham towards this gentleman, who had protested strongly against the Spanish journey, never forgot his early companionship in an undertaking of some risk. He promoted him in various ways, and, in 1631, created him Baron Cottington, of Hanworth, and Lord Cottington enjoyed several high offices, from which he was driven when the troubles began in 1640. Charles, however, trusted him to the last, and, when his failing cause detained him at Oxford, made Cottington High Treasurer of his diminished resources.

It was the fate of this loyal man to follow the

fortunes of Charles the Second into exile : thus performing, faithfully, two high, but different functions—the one to attend a youth in the height of power and prosperity on his chivalric enterprise ; the other to solace privation, and to console the young and wandering exile under his difficulties.⁷

The other chosen attendant was Endymion Porter, who had been bred up in Spain from a boy, and was familiar with the language. From Spain he was taken into the service of Edward Villiers, was brought to England, and introduced before the time when Buckingham or his family was acceptable at Whitehall.

These five persons composed, in the first instance, the whole of the party, Porter fulfilling the office of Bedchamber-man to the Prince.⁸

For some time after the departure of the Prince, no precise news of his movement was received at Court.

“We have little certainty of the Prince’s journey since his going hence,” writes Mr. Chamberlain, “but only that they landed at Boulogne the Wednesday, and rode three posts that

⁷ Nichols, iv., p. 806.

⁸ Porter, as it appears by a letter in the State Paper Office, addressed by him to his wife, was at this time a married man, and his wife, Olivia Porter, was a relation of the Marchioness of Buckingham.

night. On Friday they came to Paris, very weary, and, resting there on Saturday, went away early on Sunday morning. Some gave out that during their abode there, they saw the King⁹ at supper, and the Queen¹⁰ practising a ball, with divers other ladies. Which, though it be somewhat confidentially affirmed, yet I think it not probable, by reason it was their first Saturday in Lent. We have had since many rumours that they were stayed, but now they say a post should come yesternight, with news that they are past Bayonne, and that my Lords Digby and Gondomar, with I know not how many litters and coaches, were ready at the frontiers to receive them, which sounds as unlikely as most of the rest. Sir Edward Herbert, our ambassador, knew nothing of their being at Paris till the Lord of Carlisle's coming. All in a manner agree that either the French King had notice of it before their arrival, or time enough to have detained him, had he been so disposed. Divers of their servants and followers are gone after them by land, and more preparing to go by sea.'

It appeared afterwards that the passage to Boulogne was stormy, nevertheless, the Prince

⁹ Louis XIII.

¹⁰ Anne of Austria.

and his followers landed there two hours after, in the afternoon of the nineteenth of February. They reached Montreuil on the same night, "like men of dispatch," and Paris on the second day afterwards.

Up to this time they escaped detection; although, three posts before they entered Paris, they encountered some German gentlemen, whom they had met at Newmarket, who suspected that the disguised and hurried travellers were no less important personages than the Prince and the Favourite; but these Germans were "outfaced by Sir Richard Graham, who would needs persuade them that they were mistaken."¹¹

At Paris the travellers passed one day only; but that day was the forerunner of signal events, and pregnant with important consequence, both to Buckingham and to his royal charge.

Meantime, King James, in spite of his fears at home, was madly jealous of any surmise respecting Spain, or the Catholic religion.

On the Sunday after the Prince's departure, we are told by Mr. Chamberlain, "that all the Council about the town came to Paul's Cross, when it was expected somewhat would have been said; but the preacher had his lesson in *hæc verba*, only to pray for the Prince's prosperous journey and

¹¹ Reliquiæ Wottonianæ.

safe return, and the next day the Bishop, convening all his clergy, gave them the same charge; but some of them had anticipated the commandment and proceeded further, whereof one desired God to be merciful unto him now that he was going to the House of Rimmon." But all were not so careful; old Dr White, Prebend of St. Paul's, was dismissed for praying that the King and Prince might be preserved from any that should "go about to withdraw them from their first love, and natural religion." This was interpreted as a sort of libel.¹²

And now Buckingham was, for the second time, in the great centre of all civilization. Paris was probably unchanged; but few persons who had known the Court of France in the days of the great Henry could have recognized it during the weak rule of his successor. Henry IV., adding another instance in corroboration of the remark, that during five hundred years not one of the French monarchs had attained the age of sixty, had now been dead twelve years.¹³ To that manly and powerful monarch, bred up in the house of a peasant, his

¹² Inedited Letter in the State Paper Office, from Mr. Chamberlain to Sir D. Carleton, 1623.

¹³ He was killed on May 10th, 1610.—See Sir George Carew's Relation of the State of France under Henry IV., in Birch's Negotiations, p. 481.

iron nerves braced by hazards almost incredible; his courage proved in battles a hundred and twenty-five in number; his hardihood so great that for two years he was never seen unbooted; being perpetually in the exercise of war and hunting—to this hero, as prudent and sagacious as he was brave, had succeeded a dull and heavy boy, slow in speech, yet quick to avenge, on any of his young companions, petty or imagined slights. Timid and even dastardly by nature, the early pusillanimity of Louis the Thirteenth had attracted the notice of his father. “Faut-il donc que je sois père d’un poltron!” was the involuntary exclamation of Henry of Navarre. Such was, however, his successor, who had, in truth, far more of his mother’s disposition than of his father’s frank and princely nature. He had the Medicean fierceness and imperiousness of character, coupled with an abject spirit, which was fostered, whilst cramped, by the potent dominion of his mother over his mind.¹⁴

Marie de Medici, the queen-mother, had obtained the highest reputation for sanctity, charity, and prudence. Of her beauty, those charms which could rival the attractions of the famed Gabrielle d’Estrées, the chroniclers of the day speak loudly. In the affections of her royal husband she had, how-

¹⁴ Birch’s Negotiations, p. 492.

ever, suffered, not so much from the influence of her rival's comeliness, as from the wit and vivacity of Gabrielle's conversation. Like her son, Marie de Medici was slow in speech, and the French accounted her dull and uninteresting ; but, for the "main grounds of attending to her profit or her power," she was, writes an eye-witness of her career for four years,¹⁵ "provident enough, and her commanding and high spirit, caused her to be obeyed in all in which she was permitted to meddle."¹⁶ And the event justified this opinion. Her daughter-in-law, Anne of Austria, daughter of Philip the Third of Spain, had been several years the wife of Louis the Thirteenth, when Charles and Buckingham saw her in all the perfection of her youthful loveliness at Paris. Born in the year 1602, Anne must have been at this time in her twenty-second year. She is described as having been, at the age of fifteen, when (having been married the year previously by proxy) she was first introduced to her royal consort, singularly attractive. An ancient lady of the court drew a lively picture of her appearance to Madame de Motteville. "The first time that she saw the Queen," said that chronicler of other days, "she was seated upon

¹⁵ Sir George Carew.

¹⁶ Birch's Negotiations.

cushions, after the Spanish fashion, surrounded by a number of ladies; she was dressed in green satin, embroidered with gold and silver; her sleeves hanging, but caught up on the arm with immense diamonds, serving as buttons. She had on a close ruff; and on her head a small hat, of the same colour as her gown, from which hung a plume of Heron's feathers, adding, by their dark hue, to the beauty of her hair, which was extremely light, and frizzed in large curls."¹⁷ Such, in early youth, was the appearance of that Princess whose attractions proved eventually a source of peril and discredit to Buckingham. Her portraits give us no idea of a beauty so commanding as that which is implied by the extraordinary influence of her attractions; but it is probable that, like that of most Spanish women, it faded prematurely, and that her great charm consisted in the gaiety of her temper; in her sweetness and generosity of character; and in a certain sentimental turn of gallantry, which she conceived not to be incompatible with female virtue. At the period of Charles's first visit to Paris, Marie de Medici still ruled paramount over the weak character of her son. It had been her aim, even before the death of Henry the Fourth, to win the cold affections of her only offspring, as

¹⁷ *Memoirs of Madame de Motteville*, vol. i., p. 8.

well as those of the son of her rival, the Marquis de Verneuil, to herself. At the time when Anne of Austria, a child, gave her hand to Louis, a child also—for their ages tallied—there was an evident disposition on the part of the former to attach herself to the partner to whom the decree of state policy had joined her compulsorily. She felt no disgust at his appearance, for, though greatly inferior to the Duc de Vendome and the Marquis de Verneuil in manly beauty, the young King was tall and well-formed; and the darkness of his countenance was no disparagement in the eyes of a Princess who had been accustomed to the rich tint of Moorish and Spanish complexions.¹⁸ Upon the death of the Duc de Luisnes, the favourite of Louis, in 1621, Marie de Medici was left with no other rival in her maternal influence over her son, than his young wife. By a fatality such as too often attends royal marriages, it was henceforth decreed that the young couple were not to love each other. Anne, it appears plainly from her own confession, might have done so, had she been left to herself;¹⁹ and the young King, it was also alleged, admired the beauty of his wife and respected her amiable qualities; but it was not the policy of Marie de Medici, nor afterwards

¹⁸ Madame de Motteville.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 8.

that of Cardinal de Richelieu, that these natural affections should have their course. The King was known to avow to a confidant, that whilst he was attracted to his wife, he dared not avow it either to his mother or to Richelieu, whose counsels and services, he added, were of far more importance to him than the affection of his wife.²⁰

Such was the state of domestic affairs at the court of Louis, when the Prince and Buckingham beheld, for the first time, those who were destined to awaken in the one an honourable and enduring attachment, in the other a mad and criminal passion.

They still maintained their disguise, nor was it difficult, for, as Sir Henry Wotton observes, "the impossibility to conceive so great a Prince and favourite suddenly metamorphosed into travellers, with no greater train, was enough to make any man living unbelieve his five senses." In order to add to their disguise, Buckingham bought periwigs, to overshadow their foreheads; and thus provided, they spent a day in viewing the city and the court, which Buckingham had visited before, when in training for his courtier destiny, but which to Charles was an object of

²⁰ Madame de Motteville, p. 32.

novel and peculiar interest, France being "neighbour to his future estates."²¹

Fortune favoured their curiosity. From a gallery in the royal palace, they were so favoured as to see the King, solacing himself with familiar pleasures; the queen-mother, at her own table; nor were they discovered even by Monsieur de Cadenat, who had so lately visited England as ambassador, and who must well have known their features. Towards the evening, by an apparent chance, though, as Sir Henry Wotton observes, "underlined with a Providence," the travellers had a full view of the young queen, and of Henrietta Maria, the future queen of England. These princesses were, with the ladies of the Court, practising a dance and masque, but the diversion appears to have been held in private. The travellers, however, hearing two gentlemen talk of going to witness it, pressed in after them, and were admitted by the Duc de Montbazon, the Queen's Chamberlain, from courtesy to strangers, when, at the same time, many of the French, who wished to be spectators, were rejected. "Note here," observes Wotton, "even with the point of a diamond, by what oblique steps and imaginable preparatives the High Disposer of princes' affections doth sometimes conceive the secrets of

²¹ Madame de Motteville, p. 32.

his will." It was afterwards found that the young face which Vandyck has so often depicted on his canvas, surrounded as it was by maturer beauties, made an impression upon the imagination of Charles which only required certain circumstances to be heightened into love.²²

Anne of Austria, nevertheless, bore away the palm in the eyes of Buckingham, and even of his princely charge. Whilst they remained at Paris, the King wrote to them to the following effect:—

"Sweett boyes: the newes of youre going is allreaddie so blowin abroade as I am forced for youre safetie to poste this beareare after you who will give you his best advyce and attendance in youre journey. God blesse youe both, my sweete babes, and sende you a safe and happye returne.

"JAMES."²³

On their part, the travellers thus wrote:—

"SIR,

"Since the closing of our last, we have been at Court againe (and, that we might not nowe hold you in paine, we assure you that we have not been knowen), where we saw the young

²² Reliquiæ Wottonianæ.

²³ Harleian MSS., 6987.

queene, littell Monsieure and Madame, at her practising of a maske that is intended by the Queene to be presented to the Kinge, and in it there danced the Queene and Madame, with as mannie as made up nineteen faire dancing ladies, amongst which the Queene is the handsomest, which hath wrought in me a great desire to see her sister. So, in haste, going to bed, we humblie take our leaves, and rest

“Your Majestie’s most humble and obedient

“sone and servant,

“CHARLES ;

“and your humble slave and doge,

“STEENIE.”

On the following day, February the twenty-third, the Prince and Buckingham left Paris at the early hour of three, and proceeded towards Bayonne. Their journey, meantime, had become the theme of conversation in England, and even on the day on which the Prince set sail, it was the theme of general discussion ;²⁴ yet, abroad, so slowly did tidings travel in those days, they were still able to preserve their incognito.

At Bordeaux, however, they nearly revealed their secret. Tired, probably, of their peasant

²⁴ Nichols, vol. iv., p. 809, note.

suits, they bought fine riding coats, "all of one colour and of a noble simplicity," and the proud demeanour of Buckingham, and the high-bred grace of the Prince, could no longer be concealed.

They were invited by the Duc d'Epèrnon to be his guests, and Cottington was employed to refuse the invitation, so as to avoid exciting suspicion. He was therefore obliged to tell the Duke that he and his party were "gentlemen of mean degree, and formed to little courtship," and the excuse was received; otherwise, the Duke, being, as Sir Henry Wotton observes, "no superficial man in the practices of the world, might have pierced somewhat deeper than their outsides."²⁵

The season of Lent was now advanced, and the travellers could obtain no meat in the inns. Sir Henry Wotton relates an anecdote, which, as he remarks, is characteristic of the Prince, who is the chief hero of the little incident.

"There was, near Bayonne, a herd of goats with their young ones, upon which sight, Sir Robert Graham tells the Marquis he would snap up one of the kids, and make some shift to carry him close to their lodging; which, the Prince overhearing, 'Why, Richard,' says he, 'do you

²⁵ *Reliquiæ Wottonianæ*, p. 216.

think you may practise here your old tricks again upon the border?’ Upon which words, they first give the goatherd good contentment, and then, while the Marquis and his servant (being set on foot) were chasing the kid about the stack, the Prince, from horseback, killed him in the head with a Scottish pistol.”²⁶

The lofty bearing of Buckingham, and courteous demeanour of Charles, were not unnoticed by the Count de Grammont, the Governor of Bayonne, that “jealous key,” as Sir Henry Wotton terms it, of France. He perceived that they were gentlemen of much more consequence and higher station than their dress implied; nevertheless, he permitted them, courteously, to pass forward.

Philip IV., at whose court they were soon to present themselves, was now only in his nineteenth year. Like his weak father, he had thrown the reins of government, soon after his accession,²⁷ into the hands of an unworthy favourite. The Condé de Olivares, who had been a gentleman of the bed-chamber to Philip, when the Prince of Asturias was the haughty ruler over the destinies of the Spanish nation. Corrupt, yet able, he is stated to have increased the revenues of the crown, and, so far, to have served his sovereign

²⁶ Reliquiæ Wottonianæ.

²⁷ In 1621.

by several severe but salutary measures. Having, however, acquired some credit for these reforms, he gave loose to his own rapacity, whilst he checked that of others. He even surpassed his predecessors in acts of corruption; his heart was depraved; his selfish ambition boundless; and his private character was suspected, not without just cause, to have been stained with the darkest crimes.²⁸ Such was the minister to whom Charles and Buckingham were now to bend, as suppliants and suitors; for Philip,²⁹ imbecile and indifferent, and plunged into degrading vices, was wholly a cipher in the profuse and stately Court over which he was the nominal ruler.

Throughout the rest of the journey, the travellers did not pass entirely unknown; but were, as a writer of the day informs us, “offered great honour, would they have yielded to have been publicly known,” or in case of their return by the same route.

The Lords Andover and Kensington had gone twelve days previously in the same direction; and, in short, about two hundred nobles and

²⁸ History of Spain and Portugal.—Cabinet Cyclopædia, vol. i., pp. 91, 92.

²⁹ Of his illegitimate children, the most famous was the celebrated Don Juan, surnamed of Austria, believed to be the son of an actress of Madrid. “On this son the choicest favours of the crown were conferred.”—Ibid, 99.

gentlemen had set sail at Portsmouth, intending to land at St. Sebastian's, and to ride overland to Madrid.³⁰ Meantime, the King desired his clergy not to "prejudicate the Prince's journey, either in their sermons or prayers; but yet to pray to God to preserve him in his journey, and grant him a safe return to us"—not in more, he ordered, "nor in any other words than those."³¹

The appearance of these two adventurous travellers at Madrid was far from agreeable to Lord Digby, who would have prevented it if he had had the power. One consideration in the mind of that ambassador was a fear lest the arrival of the lavish favourite should increase the pecuniary difficulties in which he was himself involved. Twenty thousand pounds had been allowed for his embassy, but that sum was already exceeded by some thousands.³² James chose to say that much expense would be saved by the Lord Admiral's dexterous management, but Bristol answered, "Not one penny." All, the ambassador declared, should be done for his royal master's honour, but everything was to go on privately until the Papal dispensation should

³⁰ Ellis's Letters, vol. iii., p. 132, 1st series.

³¹ Ibid, 124.

³² Letter from the Earl of Bristol to King James. Madrid, Feb. 22, 1623-4.—State Papers, Foreign.

arrive. Even at this early period, the journey of the Infanta to England was discussed. By land it would, it was thought, be "very chargeable," and extraordinary inconvenient. The Spaniards, too," as the Earl stated, "thought the portion demanded by the English very exorbitant, and only to be expected had the Infanta been either deformed or of mean birth." ³³

In the midst of these negotiations, the ill-timed arrival of the Prince and Buckingham came, not to obviate obstacles, but to multiply them. Digby, now Earl of Bristol, whose jealousy of Buckingham may be detected throughout all his correspondence, was greatly discomposed by their appearance at Madrid. Nor was this a sentiment confined to Digby. Howell, who perfectly understood Spanish affairs, observes in his letters:—

"And others were of the same opinion as the ambassador, namely, that the journey was ill-advised, hazardous, undisguised, and unpopular."

The King, however, was still delighted with the momentous frolic. On the twenty-sixth of February he wrote from Newmarket, telling the Prince and Marquis what lords were to follow them to Spain. "Their poor old dade," he added, "was

³³ Letters from the Earl of Bristol to King James. Madrid, Feb. 22, 1623-4. Inedited State Papers.

lamer than ever he was, both of his right hand and foot and wryttes all this out of his naked bedde.”³⁴ The King having, in fact, encountered a very serious accident during the previous year, his health was daily becoming more feeble. It is, therefore, almost touching to find the kind-hearted, weak Monarch, prematurely aged as he was, entering most heartily into all that concerned his two absent treasures, of whose enjoyment he thought, it is obvious, far more than the welfare of his subjects. The Prince had left instructions that sixteen of his suite should follow him, with his jewels and other articles. The King, however, complains in his letter that the “imperfect note my babie had left” put him into a great deal of pain, “for ye left,” he says, “some necessary servants out, in the opinion of all your principal officers, and ye ken, as I was forced to add those, then everie man ranne upon me for his freende, so I was torn in peecis amongst thamme. I have no more to saye,” he thus concludes, “but that I weare Steenie’s picture in a blew ribben under my wastcoate, next my hearte.”³⁵

The following letter gives a characteristic account of the Prince and Steenie:—

³⁴ Nichols, 811.

³⁵ Harl. MSS., 389. Quoted in Nichols’s *Progresses*, vol. iii., p. 808.

“DEAR DAD AND GOSSOPE,

“On Friday last (March seventh) wee arrived here at five o'clock at night, both in perfect helth. The caus whie wee advertised you of it no soner, was that wee knew you would be glad to hear as well of the maner of oure reception as of oure arrivall. First, wee resolved to discover the woer,³⁶ becaus upon the speedie opening of the ports we fond (found) posts making such hast after us, that we knew it would be discovered within twelve hours after, and better wee had the thanke of it then a postillion. The next morning wee sent for Gondamar, who went presentlie to the Condé of Olivares, and as speedilie gott me your (Doge Steenie) a private audience of the Kinge.

“When I was to retorne backe to my lodging, the Condé of Olivares, himself alone, would needs accompanie me backe againe to salute the Prince in the King's name.

“The next day (March 9, Sunday, o.s.) wee had a private visit of the Kinge, the Queene, the Infanta, Don Carolus, and the Cardinal, in sight of all the world; and I may caule it a private obligation, hidden from nobodie, for there was the Pope's Nuntio, the Emperor's Imbassador, the French, and alle the streets fild with gards and

³⁶ To throw off Charles's disguise.

other people. Before the King's coch went the best of his nobilities; after followed all the Ladies of the Court. Wee sate in an invisible coch, becaus nobodie was suffered to take notice of it, though seen by all the world. In this forme they passed three times by us, but before wee could get away, the Condé of Olivares came into our coch, and convaied us home, where he tould us the King longd and died for want of a nere sight of our woer. First he took me in his coch to goe to the Kinge. We found him walking in the streets with his cloke throne over his face, and a sword and buckler by his side. He leped into the coch, and away he came to find the woer in another place appoynted, where there past much kindnes and compliment one to another. You may judge by this how sensible the Kinge is of your sone's journie, and if wee can eyther judge by outward shoes (shows) or generall speeches, we have reason to condeme your Imbassadors for righting tow (writing too) sparinglie then tow much.

“To conclude, we finde the Condé of Olivares so overvaluing of our journie, that he is so full of reall courtesie that we can doe no less than beseech your Majestie to right the kindest letter of thanks and acknowledgement you can unto him.

“He said no later unto us than this morning, that if the Pope would not give a dispensation

for a wife, they would give the Infanta to the (thy) son's Babie as his wench, and has this day righten (written) to the Cardinall Ludovicio, then Pope's nephew, that the Kinge of England hath put such an obligation upon this Kinge in sending his Sone hether that he intreats him to make hast of the dispensation, for he can denie him nothing that is in his kingdome. We must hould you thus much longer to tell you the Pope's Nuntio works as maliciouslie and as activelie as he can against us, but reseves such rude answers that we hoep he will soon werie on't.

"Wee make this collection of it, that the Pope will be verie loth to grant a dispensation, which if he will not doe, then wee would gladlie have your directions how fare wee may ingage you in the acknowledgement of the Pope's spirituall power, for we allmost find, if you will be contented to acknowledge the Pope's cheefe Hed under Christ, that the mach will be made without him. So craving your blessing, wee rest

"Your Ma'ties humble, obedient sone and servant,

"CHARLES.

"Madrill, the 10th of March, 1623.

"Your humble slave and doge,

"STEENIE.

"For the best of Fathers and Masters."

On another sheet, written at the same time, but signed by "Steenie" alone, and perhaps written without the Prince's knowledge, he says:—"The cheefest advertisment of all wee omitted in oure other letter, which was to let you know how we like your daughter, his wife, and my ladie mistris. Without flatterie, I think there is not a sweeter creature in the world. Babie Charles himself is so touched at the hart, that he confesses all he ever yett saw is nothinge to her."

The King, in his answer to this letter, dated March twenty-fifth, says:—"I have written a letre to the Condé d'Olivares, as both of you desired me, as full of thankes and kyndnes as can be desyred, as indeed he well deserves."

"I know not," says the King, in reply, "quhat ye meane by my acknowledging the Pope's spirituall supremacie. I am sure ye wolde not have me to renounce my religion for all the world; but all I can guess at your meaning is, that it may be ye have an allusion to a passage in my booke against Bellarmine, quhaire I offer, if the Pope wold guyte his godheade, and usurping over Kings, to acknowledge him for the Cheefe Bishoppe, to whom all appeals of churchmen ought to lye *en dernier ressort*; the verie wordes I sende you heere inclosed, and that is the furthest my conscience will permit me to goe upon this pointe, for I am not a Mon-

sieur, quho can shifte his religion as easilie as he can shifte his shirte quhen he commeth from tennice."

The passage in his book, which the King fancied Buckingham might allude to (though he more probably had never read it), is thus written, in the King's own hand, on a separate slip of paper: "And for myselfe, if that were yett the question, I wolde with all my hairte give my consent that the Bishoppe of Rome shoulde have the first seate. I, being a Western king, wolde go with the Patriarche of the West. And for his temporall principalities over the seignorie of Rome, I do not quenell it nether, lett him in God's name be *primus Episcopus inter omnes Episcopos et Princeps Episcoporum*, so it be no other wayes but as St. Peter was *Princeps Apostolorum*."³⁷

To these letters, Endymion Porter added an account in a letter to his wife, that the Prince and Duke were "most handsomely received. The King, Queen, and Infanta," he adds, "drove out yesterday ³⁸ in a coach, when the Prince, in another coach, saw his mistress, and was much stricken with her beauty."³⁹

It was soon found necessary to retrench the

³⁷ Harleian MSS., 6987.—Printed at length in Nichols.

³⁸ March 10, 1622-23.

³⁹ State Papers.

numbers that were to go to Spain, that the ships "might not be pestered;" no lord was to have had more than four men, no gentleman more than two. Even this seems to us rather a full complement in the present day; but, when it is remembered what an extraordinary number of jewels were worn in the dresses of that day, it will not appear too many to take care of the valuables conveyed by each peer, or to maintain the dignity and state so much insisted on at that period.

Amongst other personages who followed Charles, or, as he was called in Spain, "the wooer to the Spanish Court," was Archy, King James's fool, who must needs also have his attendant, which was at first refused, but afterwards allowed. By April, the Prince's household, jewels, apparel, and the robes for St. George's Day, were gone; tilting armour, caparisons, and horses, asked for by Charles and Buckingham, were also to follow. "The dispensation," Conway wrote, from Spain, to Sir Thomas Wentworth, "will soon be there, and nothing but either the desperately envious, or vile almanack-makers, arguing from conjunction of planets, now talk of delay."

It is curious to remark how eager those about the Court, and above all, those dependant on Buckingham, were for the marriage, and how little it was wished for by the majority of the people.

Ten ships were to set out in April, to bring back by the end of May their rich charge; such were the expectations cherished in England. Digby, a sceptical looker on, did not think that the match would be advanced by the Prince's arrival; whilst at home, difficulties arose as to the condition of the ten ships intended to be sent with the horses; the *Prince Royal*, built for Prince Henry, was found to be in so damaged a state that she was not sea-worthy; this vessel was repaired, in order to bring back Buckingham, who was expected home before the Prince, and was victualled for the voyage to Spain; but the King, with characteristic calculation, expected that the "King of Spain, who so magnificently feasted the Prince, would surely give the ships fresh victuals for their homeward journey," which action, however, seems never to have occurred to his Spanish Majesty.⁴⁰ Lord Carey, chamberlain to the Prince, received a commission to execute martial law, during the voyage to Spain, over the Prince's household, but his powers were not to extend to the captains or to the crew, nor to be exercised till the vessel was out at sea. No sad apprehensions were, however, to be allowed during Charles's absence; "where philosophy fails,"

⁴⁰ State Paper Office, vol. cxliii., No. 41.

wrote Sir Thomas Edmondes,⁴¹ "faith must begin." All things had been prepared for the Infanta's departure from her native country, and June was the latest month stated for her arrival in this, but still the Earl of Bristol, whilst protesting that the Spaniards would be the most perfidious wretches alive if they did not restore the Palatinate, for "they say that they would rather throw the Infanta into the sea, than marry her to our Prince, when his sister and her children are deprived of their patrimony," still, he feared there was "mischief brewing" about the Electorship.

Meantime, all was gay, all was gracious, at Madrid. According to a more detailed account than their own, the Prince and Buckingham rode into that city about eight o'clock in the evening of the seventh of March, attended by a postilion only, having previously ridden post three days; they alighted at the house of the Earl of Bristol, Buckingham entering first, with a portmanteau under his arm, announcing himself as "Mr. Thomas Smith;" then "Mr. John Smith" (the Prince), was sent for; he had remained standing on the other side of the street. Lord Bristol, in amazement, took the prince to his bedroom, where Charles called for pen and ink, and despatched a letter to England, to inform His Majesty how,

⁴¹ From London. March 18.

after a journey of sixteen days, he had reached Madrid in safety. The next day, Endymion Porter and Sir Francis Cottington, who had been purposely left half a day's journey behind, came also; and it was soon rumoured that some great man was come from England, and reports were even circulated that it was the King.⁴² The Condé de Gondomar was, however, soon apprised of the truth. He hastened to present himself to the Prince, and, falling flat on his face, the artful Spaniard exclaimed "*Nunc dimittis!*" as if the climax of human felicity had come to pass. The next day was Sunday, and, since the forms of the Spanish Court did not admit of an immediate presentation, it was agreed that the first meeting should take place by a kind of premeditated chance, so to speak—the Prince retaining his disguise. Charles, with the ardour of a young and romantic man, had entreated Gondomar to procure him an immediate "sight of the Infanta," which the Condé promised to do; reminding the Prince that it was Lent, which was, of course, an obstacle to a public reception. The King afterwards promised Charles that though it were Lent, it should not be "Lent to him;" and that he should have all he would, and

⁴² Howell's Letters, p. 116.

all that the country should afford.”⁴³ In the evening of Saturday, Buckingham went in a close coach to Court, where he had a private audience of King Philip, and also of the Condé Olivares, who accompanied him back to the Prince, whose hand he kissed, kneeling, clasping his arms also round Charles’s legs. Endymion Porter was the interpreter, on this occasion, between the Prince and Olivares.⁴⁴

On Sunday afternoon, Charles, for the first time, saw the young Princess towards whom he afterwards played so unworthy a part. It was in the park of Madrid. The Infanta was seated in the boot of the carriage, with a blue ribbon round her arm, in order that the Prince might distinguish her. A grand *cortége*, composed of the chief nobility of that proud Court, followed the royal carriages. Charles, disguised, with Buckingham by his side, Gondomar and Sir Walter Aston being in the same carriage, went in the Duke de Cea’s coach. It had been settled that no recognition should take place. The Infanta, as her royal suitor

⁴³ The account of the Prince’s reception in Spain is chiefly taken from “A True Relation and Journal of the Arrival and Entertainment given to the High and Mighty Prince Charles, by the King of Spain.—Printed in Nichols’s Progresses, vol. iii., p. 818.

⁴⁴ Howell.

passed her, could not conceal her agitation; the colour came into her face; neither could her brother and Charles help exchanging salutations, as they drove repeatedly past each other, both in the town and Prado. Evening drew on, and the King and the royal party returned home by torch-light, the effect of which was magnificent.

Still, it was thought due to the observance of Lent, as well as agreeable to etiquette, that private interviews only should take place, especially before Charles had made his public entrance. That same evening, therefore, the King, after many punctilios, in which the soul of Spanish honour and politeness was displayed, met the Prince again in the park, taking him into his own coach, and placing him at his right hand. On parting, there was an embarrassing ceremonial—the King insisting on conducting Charles back to his carriage, Charles not suffering it. So they parted midway on the road.

Charles's days passed, indeed, in a manner peculiarly agreeable to one of his disposition. On one occasion, having first seen the King ride through the streets on horseback to a monastery called La Merced, where the King had rooms furnished for occasional residence, he went afterwards to take the air by the fields on the river's

side; another day, he repaired to the palace, and was conducted by Olivares through the back way. "Your babie," Buckingham wrote to the King, "desired to kiss his (the King's) hands privatelie in the pallace, which was granted him, and thus performed. First, the King would not suffer him to come to his chamber, but met him at the stare-foote; then entered in the coch, and walked into the parke. The greatest matter that passed between us at that time was complements and particular questions of all our journaie; then, by force, he would needs convaie him half way home; in doing which they were almost overthroned in brick pits."⁴⁵

Many were the resources to which Charles turned for relaxation during this interval of expectation. His mornings were spent in his private affairs, among which we may reckon the cultivation of his taste for pictures; in the afternoon, accompanied by his beloved Steenie, he went forth into the fields, where Bristol attended on him with his hawks; or he visited a country house of the King's, called *Caso del Campo*, where, meeting Philip and his brothers, Don Carlos and Don Fernando the Cardinal, they diverted themselves by watching "men placed there to shoot at such kinds of game as were

⁴⁵ Note from Harl. MSS., 6987.—Nichols, p. 823.

found in the place ;” hares were started, partridges sprang up, and other fowl, all of which were killed, after the custom of that day, as they went running or flying by the marksmen. Sometimes the King, with the old Spanish courtesy, sent the Prince two horses, desiring him to choose the best for himself, and to leave him the worst to ride out on ; then Charles would order the steeds to be exercised in a garden near the Earl of Bristol’s house, and, not to be outdone in politeness, he would himself try them both, and send the best back for the King’s use.

At length the day arrived when Charles made his solemn entry into Madrid, under circumstances of interest which almost superseded even the imposing magnificence of the ceremonial. On the sixteenth of March, he received the Inquisitor General, and all the different Councils of the kingdom—the Corregidores and the Regidores of Madrid—at the Monastery of San Geromino, whence the Kings of Spain always make their public entrance. These public functionaries endeavoured, on being presented to the Prince, to kiss his hand, but Charles resisted this demonstration, considering that it was due only to the lawful sovereign of the realm.

The magnificence of the procession that en-

sued owed much of its picturesque beauty to its being on horseback. As they approached the immediate precincts of Madrid — Charles riding on the right of Philip—they were met by four and twenty Legidores of the town—whose office it was to carry over the King's head a canopy of tissue, lined with crimson cloth of gold. The King then took the Prince under the canopy, still keeping him on his right hand; before them rode the Ministers of Justice, next the grandees, sumptuously clad, for it is an old saying, that no one dresses so plainly every day, nor so gorgeously on occasions, as the Spaniards.⁴⁶ Their picturesque costumes, their grave and stately bearing, their gallant steeds—so famed throughout Europe — must have made this band of nobles one of the fairest spectacles of the time.

They were appalled, as the chronicler expresses it, “in colours and great bravery,” their servants, in rich liveries, attending.

After the King and Prince came Buckingham and Olivares, in their respective offices of Master of the Horse, each of them with a horse of state, as the ensign of the place he enjoyed. The canopy held over these two favourites and ministers was afterwards presented to Buckingham, as well as all other fees belonging to the Master of

⁴⁶ Howell's Letters.

the Horse—because he served that day the Prince in whose honour the procession took place. Then came Lord Bristol, Sir Walter Aston, and the Council of State, with the gentlemen of the King's bedchamber; and a part of that "goodly guard," called "de los archeros, bravely clad and arrayed."

This unrivalled procession passed along through streets hung here and there with rich draperies, or adorned with curious pictures, and "sprinkled" with scaffoldings, on which stood the chief magistrates of Madrid; in some streets, also, there were dancers, comedians, and musicians, to amuse the royal pair as they rode gracefully onwards. At length, the King and Charles reached the palace, where some time was consumed by ancient ceremonials, each contending for the hindmost place; but, "in fine," writes the chronicler, "they went hand-in-hand, or, rather, with their arms round each other, until they came into the presence of the Queen."

Her Majesty was seated under a cloth of state, at the extremity of a large room, where the chairs were placed. This apartment was superbly furnished; but the chief riches, it is said, consisted in that "living tapestry of ladies, and of the children of noblemen who stood near the walls." The Queen, not awaiting the approach of Charles,

went forward to welcome him; he was then conducted to the apartments destined for him, the Queen herself, with the King, seeing him to the very doors, where her royal brothers-in-law stood to receive him. There was then a courteous dispute, the Prince wishing to attend His Majesty back to his own part of the palace; Philip insisting that Charles should only make one step in that direction. Scarcely an hour had elapsed, before a great basin of massive gold, carried by two men, and containing an embroidered night-gown, laid double in it, was brought—a present from the Queen to Charles; besides which, she sent him two large trunks, bound in bands of pure gold, and thickly stuck with gold nails—with a gold lock and key; the coverings of the trunks were of amber leather, whilst their contents consisted of curious linens and perfumes. In addition to these, there was also presented a rich desk, every drawer of which was full of rarities; Buckingham, at the same time, receiving a “noble present” from the Condessa Olivares. That night the old town was illuminated both with torches and fireworks, which were kept up for eight days.

Such was the commencement of Charles’s residence in Spain. It was decreed that he should be attended only by nobles, and served and addressed

as a King; The Condé de Gondomar and the Condé de Plueba were to act as Majordomos; the Condé de Monterey, brother-in-law of Olivares, was to be his chief Majordomo. The most delicate attention of all was, however, the King's giving two gilt keys to the Prince, requesting him to present one of them to those of his attendants whom he most preferred, in order that the whole of the palace might be open to him or his retinue. The keys were, of course, given to Buckingham and Bristol.

Whilst such delicate hospitality was being manifested in Spain, James, at home, was collecting all the jewels he could with any propriety send, and some which he had no right to give away, to add to the grandeur of Babie and Steenie. His letter, on this occasion, is most characteristic of his infatuation for the Spanish match, and of his easy conscience on matters connected with religion.⁴⁷

He writes thus:—

“MY SWEETE BOYES,

“I wrytte nou this sevint (seventh) letre unto you upon the sevinteent of March,⁴⁸ sent in my ship called the Adventure, to my tuo boyes,

⁴⁷ Nichols, 832, note.

⁴⁸ 17th March, 1622-23.

adventurers, quhom God ever blesse! And now to beguinne with Him:—A Jove principium—I have sent you, my babie, two of youre Chaplains, fitted for this purpose, Mawe and Wrenne, together with all ornaments and stuffe fit for the service of God. I have fullie instructed them in all theyre behavioure, and theyre service shall, I hoape, prove decent and agreeable to the puritie of the Primitive Church, and yett as near the Romane forme as can lawfullie be done, for it hath ever been my way to goe with the Church of Rome, *usque et aras*. All the particulars hereof I remitte to the relation of youre before-named chaplens.”

The King then mentions that he sent the robes of the Order of the Garter. “Quhache,” he says, “you must not forgette to wear on St. George’s Day, and dine together in thaime,” if they arrived in time, which he hoped to God would be the case, for it would be “a goodlie sight for the Spaniards to see my two boyes dine in thaime.”

The King next enumerates the jewels he despatched:—

“For my babies’ presenting his mistresse, I sende an olde double crosse of Lorraine, not so rich as anciente, yet not contemtible for the valewe: a goodly looking-glasse, with my picture in it, to be hung at her girdle, quhiche ye must tell her ye

have caused it so to be enchawnted by a vile magike, as, quhensoever she shall be pleased to look into it, she shall see the fairest ladie that ather her brother's or youre father's dominions can afforde.⁴⁹ Ye shall present her also," James continues, "two faire long dyamonts, sett lyke an anker, and a faire pendant dyamont hanging at thaime; a goodlie roape of pearles," a collar, or carcanet, of thirteen great ballas rubies, and thirteen knots or cinques of pearls; together with a "head-dressing, and two-and-twentie great pear pearls;" also, three pear-shaped diamonds, the largest of which was to be worn "at a needle," in the middle of her forehead, and one in each ear.

His "babie," the King decreed, was to have his own round brooch of diamonds, and he sent also a famous jewel called the "Three Brethren," consisting of a great pointed diamond, with three great pearls attached to it, and a large pendent pearl; also, the "Mirror of France," "the fellowe of the Portugal Dyamont," which, says the King, "I would wishe you to weare alone in your hatte, with a little blakke feather. Ye have also," he adds, "goode dyamont buttons, of your own,

⁴⁹ Thus described in the list :—"A looking-glasse set in goulde, the backside richly garnished with faire dyamondes, and six peeces of chayne to hange it, garnished with dyamondes on both sydes."

to be sett to a doublett or jerkin. As for your T, it maye serve for a present to a Don.”⁵⁰

Steenie was furnished with a fair table diamond, which the King wanted to have given him before, but Buckingham had refused it; to this a “faire pewre pearl” was now suspended, “for wearing,” said the thoughtful monarch, more occupied with these details than with the good of England, “in thy hatte, or quhaire thow plessis; and if my babie will spaire thee the two long dyamonts in form of an anker, with the pendant dyamont, it were fitt for an admirall to weare, and he hath enough better jewels for his mistresse.”

Then follows a trait of the gentle Marchioness, quite in keeping with the whole of her character :

“Thow hes of thyne owne thy goode olde jewell, thy three pindars dyamonts, the picture-cace I gave Kate, and the greate dyamont chaine I gave her, quho wolde have sent thee the best paire she hadde, if I hadde not stayed her.”

Divers other jewels were to be sent with the fleet for presents, “for saving of chairges quhair have too much nede.” These were to be presents to Spanish grandees.

The King then concludes :—

“Thus ye see how, as long as I want the sweete comfort of my boyes’ conversation, I ame forced,

⁵⁰ A jewel in the form of a T.

yea, and delytes, to converse with thaim by long letres. God bless you both, my sweete boyes ; and sende you, after a successful journey, a joyful and happie returne in the armes of your dear dad,

“JAMES R.

“Dated from Newmarket, on Saint Patrick’s Day, quho of olde was too well patronized in the cuntrey ye are in.”

A few kind and amiable expressions from the Marchioness of Buckingham to her husband reached him too at this time.⁵¹ “I thanke you for sending me sò good nuse of our younge mistres. I am very glad she is so delicat a creaturr, and of so sweett a disposicion. Indeed, my Lady Bristol sent me word she was a very fine lady, and as good as fine. I am very glad of it, and that the Prince likes her so well, for the King ses (says) he is wonderfully taken with her. It is a wonderfull good hairing, for it were great pettye but the Prince should have on (one) he can love ; because I thinke he’ll make a very honest husband, which is the greatest comfort in this world, to have man and wife love truly. I tould the King of the private message the Infanta sent to the Prince, to wear a great rouffe

⁵¹ Nichols, 817, note.

(ruff). He laft heartely, and seed (said) it was a very good sign."

The Prince and Buckingham adopted a practice of writing joint letters; for which Charles, in the next dispatch, apologized. "I hope in writing jointly as we doe," the Prince wrote, "we please you best, for I assure your Majesty it is not for saving paines."⁵² "To which James answers:—"I wonder quhy ye shoulde aske me the question if ye should send me any more jointe letters or not. Alace! sweet hairts, it is all my comforte in your absence that ye wrytte jointe unto me, besides the great ease it is both to me, and ye neede not doubte but I will be wairie enough in not acquainting my counsel with any secrete in your letres. But I have been troubled with Hamilton,⁵³ quho, being presente by chawnce at my ressavng both of your firste and seconde paquette out of Madrid, wold needs peere over my shoulder quhen I was reading them, ofring ever to help me to reade any harde words, and, in good faith, he is in this busynesse,

⁵² Nichols, 835. Note from Harleian MSS., 6987.

⁵³ James Hamilton, second Marquis of Hamilton, in Scotland, upon whom James had conferred, in 1619, the Earldom of Cambridge, a title formerly borne by King Edward IV., before his accession to the Throne. The Marquis was Steward of the Royal Household.—Burke's *Extinct Peerage*.

as in all things else, as variable and uncertaine as the Moone."

A hint from Charles showed that he both feared his father's indiscretion, and also apprehended opposition from the Council. "I beseech your Majesty," he now wrote, "advyse as little with your counsel in these busineses as you can."

James, indeed, had the unthankful task of extorting, from unwilling hands at home, money for those abroad.⁵⁴

"But, in earniste, my babie," he afterwards wrote, "ye must be as spairing as ye can in your spending thaires, for youres."

Amongst the jewels transmitted to Spain was a collar of gold, weighing thirteen great ballaces, and thirteen pieces of gold, with thirteen links of pearl between them. This valuable was, in 1606, annexed to the crown of England, or, as it was stated in the deed, "to the kingdoms of this realm." It is evident that James had incurred some censure for sending what was not his own property away, for he seems to have exercised greater caution afterwards. The demands from Spain were, indeed, insatiable. Charles modestly wrote to his father thus:—⁵⁵

"Sir,—I confess that ye have sent more jewels

⁵⁴ Nichols, p. 840.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 845.

than at my departure I thought to have had use of; but, since my coming, seeing manie jewels worne heere, and that my braverie can consist of nothing else besydes;—that sume of them which ye have appointed me to give the Infanta, in Steenie's oppinion and myne, ar nott fitt to be given to her; therefore I have taken this bouldness to intreate your Majesty to send more for my owen wearing and for giving to my mistress; in which I thinke your Majestie shall not doe amiss to take Carlile's⁵⁶ advyce."

This letter was in the Prince's hand-writing.

Buckingham's less humble spirit was shown in the following postscript, which was in his own hand, and forms a singular contrast with the respectful tone of that of the Prince on the same topic:—

"I, doge; ye sayes you have manie jewels neyther fit for your one (own), your sone's, nor your daughter's⁵⁷ wearing; but verie fitt to bestow of those here, who must necessarilie have presents, and this way will be least chargeable to your Majestie in my poore opinione."⁵⁸

Three days after, the Duke wrote again in a still more insolent tone; and gave His Majesty his "poore and sausie opinion of what would be fittest to send."

⁵⁶ The Earl of Carlisle.

⁵⁷ Referring not to Elizabeth of Bohemia, but to the Infanta.

⁵⁸ Nichols, p. 846.

Hitherto, the Marquis said, the King had been so sparing, that when he thought to have sent the Prince sufficient for his own use, and for presents to the Infanta, and to lend to himself, he, on the contrary, had been forced to lend jewels to the Prince.⁵⁹

“You neede not aske,” Buckingham continued, “who made me able to do it. Sir, he hath neither chaine nor hat-band, and I beseech you consider how rich they are in jewells here. Then what a poore equipage he came in, how he hath no other meanes to appear as a King’s sonne, how they are usefulest at such a tyme as this, when they may doe yourselfe, your sonne, and the nation’s honor: and lastlie, how it will neyther caust nor hasard you anie thinge. These resons, I hope, since you have ventured allreadie your chieftest jewel, your sonne, will serve to persuade you to let louse theese more after him: first, your best hat-band; the Portingall diamond; the rest of the pendant diamonds to make up a necklace to give his mistress; and the best roape of pearls, with a rich chaine or tow, for himselfe to waire, or else your doge must want a collar,⁶⁰ which is the readie way to put him into it. There are manie other jewells which are

⁵⁹ Nichols, vol. ii., p. 847, dated March 25, 1623.

⁶⁰ Alluding to having lent the Prince his own jewels.

of no mean qualitie, as they deserve not that name, but will save much in your purs, and serve very well for presents. They had never so good and great an occasion to take the aire out of their boxes as at this time. God knowes when they shall have such another, and they had need sometimes to get near the sonne, to continue them in there perfection.

“Madrid, 25th of Aprill, 1623.”

In a postscript, Buckingham announced that he had sent the King four asses, five camels, and one elephant, “which,” he adds, “is worth your seeing, and a Barbarie horse from Walter Aston.” The animals Buckingham sent he had “imprudently begged for:” and he promised “to lay waitte for all the rare color birds” that could be heard of. “But if you doe not send your Babie jewells enough,” thus his letter concludes, “ile stope all other presents; therefore, looke to it.”

The King, taking this impertinence as a joke, thanked his “sweet Steenie gossip” for his “kind, drolling letter,” and suggested that should Babie not think it fit to present all the jewels to the Infanta, they should be brought home again; and ventured to propose also that with regard to a present to the Condé Olivares, horses, dogs and hawks, and such like stuff sent out of England,

“by the sweete boyes, would be a far more acceptable present than a jewel.” He began, perhaps, to feel some remorse at his lavish folly. Prince Henry’s sword — which another father would have valued, independently of the costly diamonds with which the handle was set—had been given to the King of Spain. It was considered next in value to the Prince’s crown, and bestowed on Prince Henry by his royal mother at his creation as Prince of Wales; and had been sent in a masque, in the fanciful fashion of the day, as from Tethys to one of the Meliades.⁶¹ All these jewels were, however, honourably returned during the year the Spanish match was broken off.⁶²

After the important matter of the jewels had been discussed, Charles received from his father a few lines, protesting, on the word of a King, that whatsoever his son should promise in his name should be punctually performed. Charles had asked for something explicit under His Majesty’s own hand,⁶³ to show that he had full powers; the request was presumptuous, but Charles, who wrote it, and Buckingham, who advised it, knew to whom they applied. “It were a strange trust,” the King answered, “that I wold refuse to putte

⁶¹ Nichols, 848. Note from *Archæologia*, vol. xv. p. 18.

⁶² *Ibid*, 249.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 857.

upon my owne son, and upon my best servante.”

This servant he was now resolved to honour above all other great ones of the land, by creating him a Duke. Buckingham had probably been desirous of obtaining this honour ever since his being created Marquis, and had been employing every means of compassing his ends, by the aid of his dependents and partisans at home. Through the exertions of Secretary Conway, he had been addressed as “your Excellency.” Since that distinction is only applied to ambassadors, it is possible that Bristol may have considered it an infringement on his province to give it to Buckingham.

It was, however, one of Buckingham’s most cherished objects of ambition to assert a pre-eminence over Bristol at the Court of Spain.

There was, at this time, no English dukedom; that of York having merged into the title of Prince of Wales. The Duke of Lennox, the King’s near relation, was the only Scottish nobleman who bore the title; and he had, for forty years, held this distinction. In order to avoid placing the new duke above this nobleman, Lennox was created Earl of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and Duke of Richmond, on the seventeenth of May, and Buckingham was raised to the dukedom on the eighteenth. It was at the same

time in contemplation to create two more Dukes; the Marquis of Hamilton was to be Duke of Cambridge; the Earl of Arundel, Duke of Norfolk, that nobleman refusing anything less than the restitution of that title. These creations did not take place, partly owing to the pride of the Duchess of Lennox, who wished to stand alone, and partly to that of Buckingham, whose letter to the King, on this occasion, shows his great ambition, and proves his audacity and influence.

It had been at first proposed to make him Duke of Buckingham and Clarence, thus reviving in his person a title used hitherto only by the Princes of the blood.

“DEAR DAD AND GOSSOPE,⁶⁴

“It cannot but have bine an infinite trouble to have written so longe a letter, and so sone, especiallie at this painfull time of your armes; yet wish I not a word omitted, though the reading forsed blouses (blushes), deserving them no better; neyther is it fitt I should dissemble with my master, wherefore I confess I am not a gott (jot) sorie for the paines you have taken. This might argue I love my-

⁶⁴ Harl. MSS., 6987. In Buckingham's own Autograph, quoted by Nichols, note, p. 854.

selfe better than my master : but my disobedience in all my future actions shall witnes the contrarie ; and I can trulie say it is not in the power of your large bountiful hand and hart, ever hereafter, eyther to increase my dutie and love to you, or to overvalue myselfe as you doe by thinking it fitt I should be set so farre above my fellows. There is this difference betwixt that noble hand and hart : one may surfitt by the one, but not by the other, and soner by yours than his one (own). Therefore give me leave to stope with mine that hand which hath bine but too redie to execute the motions and affections of that kind obliging hart to me. As for that argument, that this can be no leading case to others, give me leave to say it's trew onele in one (but that's a greate and the maine) poynt, for I grant that I am more than confident you will never love moree of your servants (I will pausie here) better than Steenie.

“Thus it will be no leadeing, but you can not denie but it may be a president of emulation hereafter to those that shall succeed you, to expres as much love as you have done to me, and I am sure they may easlie find better subjects. So, if it be unfit in respect of the number (of Dukes that may be created), this way it will be increased ; but I mayntaine it's unfitt

in respect there is not here (in Spain), as in other places, a distinction between Duckes' and Kings' children, and before I make a gape or a stepe to that paritie between them, I'le disobey you—which is the most I can say or doe. I have not so much unthankfulness to denie what your Majesty sayeth, that my former excus of the disproportion of my estate is taken away, for you have filled a consuming purse, given me faire howses, more land than I am worthie, and to maintain both me and them, filled my coffers as full with patents of honer that my shoulders cannot bare more. This, I say, is a still great argument for me to refuse; but have not bine contented to rest here, when I thought you had done more than enough, and as much as you could; but hath found out a way which, to my heart's satisfaction, is far above all, for with this letter you have furnished and enriched my cabinett with so precious a witnes of your valuation of me, as in future tymes it cannot be sayde that I rise, as most courtiers doe, through importunitie, for which caracter of me, and incomparable favor from, I will sine (sign) with as contented, nay, as proud a hart, from your poare Steenie, as Duke of Buckingham."

Meantime, festivities were carried on in Spain which rivalled the most brilliant spectacles wit-

nessed in that age of pageantry, during which chivalric manners and chivalric sports were for the last time seen in England, since they were never revived after the Rebellion.

On Easter Sunday a masque was performed in honour of the strangers. The Queen, clad in white, in remembrance of the Resurrection, and decked in jewels, dined in public, first having duly observed the solemn religious services of the festival.

Prince Charles also dined in public; the gentlemen-tasters, it is especially noted, attended, and the Earl of Bristol gave them the towel.

After vespers, the Court assembled, and the palace was thronged with strangers from the various provinces, all eager to see the "wooer." Charles was then in the full vigour of his youth; he is depicted by Velasquez, at or about this period, as possessing that bloom which care so early destroys; his face was ever rather interesting and picturesque than handsome; but it may easily be imagined how, set off by the charm of manner, the graces of his person may have been exaggerated by those who now welcomed him as a suitor to the young princess. He had, on this occasion, adopted, for the first time, the Spanish national costume, and was in a black dress, "richly garded," after the Spanish fashion, with

the George about his neck, hanging by a watchet ribbon. "The enamelled garter," so states the Spanish chroniclers, "exceeded that colour" (the watchet) "in brightness, and his Majesty might as clearly be discerned as a sun amid the stars. This being not the meanest action and demonstration of his prudence, that being a travelling guest, who came by the post, not being able to shine with equal lustre, he came to participate of the Spanish sun."⁶⁵

From this observation it appears that the jewels promised by James had not then arrived. The Prince must, therefore, have acted as a contrast, though not a foil, to King Philip, who was resplendent in a dress of ash colour, with an immense Golden Fleece, and a huge chain, baudrick-wise, around his neck, "robbing," as the annalist declared, in his girdle, and other jewels, the "glory of Phœbus' beams;" in his hat he displayed a large waving plume. Then came Buckingham, whom the chroniclers of the day style the Admiral, and Olivares, and they repaired to the Queen's apartments, where the Infanta, with her Majesty, came out to receive them. At the interview which then took

⁶⁵ Narrative of Andres of Mendoza. This tract was entered at Stationer's Hall, July 5, 1623. There is a copy in the British Museum, and also in the Bodleian Library. Only two others are known.—Nichols, 856.

place, Sir Walter Aston acted as interpreter; in that capacity he wished the Queen a happy Easter; the young and blushing Infanta, standing by, received these compliments, which were presumed to come direct from Charles, with a modesty and gravity far beyond her years. Then their Majesties went to the window of the south gallery to see the trial of arms in the Court of the Palace.

The whole beauty, rank, and splendour of Spain were assembled in this gallery, but none were more remarkable for grace, and for the knowledge of the Court, than the Condessa Olivares—whose name was afterwards coupled with Buckingham's in scandalous terms. She is expressively said to have given "a life to all actions of greatness and courtship. She was only exceeded in address by her husband, between whom and Buckingham a coolness soon afterwards commenced. A trial of arms, the champions and their attendants being masked, then took place, beginning from the house occupied by Buckingham, near the Royal Hospital of Misericordia, and extending to the palace, upon which were set the cartels of challenge, to which the Marquis de Alcanizas, on the part of the Spaniards, and Buckingham, on that of the English, were respondents.

Buckingham's "livery," on this occasion, was

very costly. It consisted of hoods of orange, tawny, and silver cloth, set with flowers and Romaine devices of black cloth, edged with silver in circles, with turbans in Moorish fashion, and white plumes. Two courses were run in the palace-court, the chief masker being the flattered favourite of King James. Amid the gallant throng, four maskers, in Turkish costume, attracted especial notice. One of them was discovered, by the brightness of his hair, and his stateliness in running at the ring, to be the King, who thus testified the honour he wished to pay to Buckingham by joining in the same sport.⁶⁶

The Bull-fight, or Panaderia, followed the trial of arms, and took place during Pentecost. This cruel diversion had been repeatedly prohibited by Papal bulls, but to no purpose. So common was it to have several men killed during a bull-fight, that priests were always on the spot, ready to confess the dying; and according to Howell, who was present on this occasion, it was not unusual to see a man dangling on each horn of the bull, with his entrails hanging from him.⁶⁷

The bull-fight at which Charles and Buckingham were present, was held on the first of June; and scarcely had the day dawned, when a con-

⁶⁶ Nichols, p. 864.

⁶⁷ Howell's Letters.

course of nobility rushed to the Panaderia or Bullangerie, as it is called in the old chronicle; where, in the centre of a space encircled by twelve arches of unpolished stone, a gilded scaffolding was erected, the lower part of which was covered with cloth of gold and silver, mingled with crimson. On either side were smaller scaffoldings, divided from the principal one by partitions of crimson cloth, spotted with gold. This erection had only been once used, when the Duc de Maine had visited Madrid for the espousals, by proxy, with Anne of Austria. On the left hand there was a portal by which persons seated on the scaffolding might go in and out of the scaffolding; and on the summit of all were two canopies of Florence cloth, of carnation-colour, interspersed with gold rays, with chairs of cloth of gold and silver underneath them, and hung with rich tapestry. On these various stages stood the nobility of Spain and the Council; whilst, beneath the canopy, their Majesties were seated, the Pope's Nuncio standing on the right hand, and the several ambassadors on the left. The Corregidores of Madrid, with their eight servants and four lacqueys, in "glorious liveries" of plain black velvet, with embroidered skirts, cloaks of black cloth, and doublets of black lace, and feathers of a colour "which all the place ad-

mired and wondered at," received the Council,—
"that high senate," so writes the chronicler, entering
with a wonderful majesty, and so taking their places.

All the ladies of the Court, the nobility and Council and Corregidores, being placed according to degree, the Queen and the Infanta made their appearance, driving to the Panaderia in their coaches. These two Princesses were dressed in dark grey, embroidered with *lentils* of gold, and wore plumes and jewels in their hair. The Queen's *carroche*, as it was called in the old language of the day, was followed by numerous other coaches, in which sat the flower of the Court, all ladies of the highest rank, who, how sombre soever the fashion of their dresses, displayed in their equipages the gayest colours, according well with the rich hues which nature, at that season, produced. This procession was escorted by the Alcaldes on horseback, whose troop was augmented by a number of English and Spanish knights, officers, and grandees. As the Queen and Infanta alighted, they were conducted by the captain of the guard, clad "in a brave livery of dark yellow," and wearing a plume, to their seats.

Amid the escort who did honour to the Queen that day, appeared most conspicuously the then gay and sanguine Charles the First, in the brief may-day of his life. He rode on a parti-coloured

horse, curbed with no bit, which seemed, beneath its royal burden, to have laid aside its high spirit, and to submit to the skilful management of the young equestrian. The Prince, it is specified, looked "relucient in black and white plumes ;" he accompanied the King, mounted on a dapple grey, also without the bit. Philip wore the dark-coloured suit of his country. Then came Buckingham, with the Condé Olivares, the Master of the Horse, preceding the band of English gentry, and riding with the Council of State and Chamber of Spain.

Having taken their appointed seats, Charles and his countrymen beheld, first, fifty lacqueys in high-Dutch costume of cloth of silver, with caps of wrought silver, follow the Duke de Cea, into the enclosure. Behind the Duke rode the combatants, distinguished by great tawny plumes, and hose of tawny cloth, laced with silver. They were scrupulously alike. Scarcely had this gallant Spanish noble paid his homage to the royal personages present than the Duke de Maqueda, looking, says the enthusiastic chronicler, "like one of the Roman Cæsars," and followed by many noblemen, attended by a hundred lacqueys in dark-coloured serge, banded with lace, and relieved with silver belts and white garters, rode gallantly into the palace.

Next appeared the Condé de Villamor, with his fifty lacqueys in white printed satin, with doublets of azure, silk, and gold, set out with tufts of gold and silver lace, with white plumes on their hats; and amid this gorgeous throng, on a chestnut horse, rode the Condé, his horse's main and tail being drawn out with silver twist, "surpassing even the horses of Phœbus' chariot." Such was the waving of feathers, that it was, says the beholder, like "a moving garden, or an army of Indians."

And now came the two combatants—Gaviria and Bonifaz; or, as they were called, Kill-bulls. They, too, had their lacqueys—Bonifaz in white plumes, whilst those of Gaviria were distinguished by dark green suits. Lastly, appeared the Cavalier de la Morzilla, who came to "try his fortune with lance and target."

Although by right the office of Marshal, on this occasion, belonged to the Condé Olivares, it was surrendered to Buckingham, Charles giving precedence to his favourite; so that it was the proud office of the once lowly Villiers to appear chief in the court of Spain, as he had often done in that of England. He stood, therefore, behind the Infanta, Don Carlos, and by the side of Olivares, who acted not only as an adviser, but also as interpreter—the Duke, it

seems, having never acquired Spanish. The part thus allotted to Olivares, though a subordinate one, was performed with due punctilio and courtesy; and as one sensible of the honour which James had done him in the "letters, full of wisdom and gravity," with which he had honoured him.

Then the lacqueys drew back, and looking in their blue and red colours like a harvest in June blown about by the breeze, left their lords to the perilous encounter. The bull-fight witnessed by Charles and Buckingham differed little from that still unhappily the chief delight of the Spaniards in our own times, except that, to pay the more refined tribute to the Prince and his favourite, the combatants were of high rank. As the Condé de Villamor, to whom the first encounter was allotted, rode to the assault, his retainers showered darts on the bull; whose hide resembled, according to the flowery narrative of Mendoza, a quiver, or recalled "the thorny hedges of Helvetia;" but the bystanders, seeing the poor animal's agonies, took out the arrows with great velocity, although, in so doing, they were in imminent danger of their lives. De Magueda signalised himself by many brave attempts; but it was the glory of a combatant named Cantilana that he killed a bull. Bonifaz and

Gaviria made such desperate attacks on the poor animals, that their assaults could not be counted; but the greatest praise was due to De Velada; who overthrew two or three bulls by "dint of sword and gore of lance," but, having wounded one of these infuriated creatures between the eyes, ran so great a risk that the King would not suffer him to enter a second time into the lists. Numerous, indeed, were the feats that might incite to poetry, or to song, had not the conflict been of so cruel and so debasing a nature; so that the valour which was so largely displayed might even be said to verge upon brutality. Mendoza enumerates them with a savage enthusiasm. Amid the most successful of the bull-killers appeared the famous Montezuma, who did credit to his royal blood and established bravery by putting a bull to flight, the animal having unaccountably showed signs of fear; he was pursued by Montezuma, and, struck by a cleaving blow of the sword, was left for dead. As the fight drew near its close, Antonio Gamio, the Duke de Cea's second, made one of the bravest assaults of the day upon a furious bull, upon which he rushed, leaving half of his lance within him, whilst cries of delight and shouts of exultation rang through the air, and the bull fell down dead by the side of the fearless combatant;

the horse stood perfectly still, showing to what a degree of perfection management had brought the courser ; so intrepid when urged onward, so docile when occasion required.

The bull-fight being ended, the Queen and Infanta returned, beneath a shower of rain, which surprised them in that season, to the palace, where they sought repose after the exciting scenes, in which even the young and gentle Infanta took a delight apparently inconsistent with her character. Nothing, indeed, can exceed the raptures of Andres de Mendoza, from whose animated pages this narrative is drawn. "Since the report is Festival," he says, referring to his own exaggerated descriptions, "it is but like to that which was to be seen with the eye. You would have said as much if you had but seen them fight with those furious beasts, showing themselves the more valiant, in that they were undaunted and resolved Spaniards."⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Narrative of Andres de Mendoza, Nichols, p. 869.

END OF VOL I.

ERRATA.

VOL. I.

- Page 12, lines 5 and 16—*for* Brokesby *read* Brookesby.
,, 13, ,, 1—*for* Brokesby, *read* Brookesby.
,, 43, ,, 21—*for* Lord de Ross, *read* Lord de Roos.
,, 87,—*note—for* Endysmoir Porter, *read* Endymion
Porter.
,, 92, line 6—*for* Abbo, *read* Abbot.
,, 97, *delete* first line.
,, 108, line 6—*for* favours *read* favour.
,, 155, ,, 17—*for* King James's room ; though, *read*
King James's room, where.
,, 163, ,, 13—*for* pours out of contention, *read* comes
out of contention.
,, 172, ,, 18—*for* a young lady of the seven, *read* a
young lady of the seventeenth
century.
,, 186, ,, 27—*for* of his succession, *read* of his suc-
cessor.

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